● 175

[For additional information on the history of slavery in Georgia, South Carolina and the coastal Sea Islands, see Category 17.]

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

Introduction

175 THE AFRICAN NEGRO, INTRODUCED AS A SLAVE INTO Virginia in 1619, had been a part of the plantation life of the older colonies of America for more than a century before the Colony of Georgia was founded in 1733. Almost two decades passed before the Trustees of Georgia legalized Negro slavery. Thus it was the middle of the eighteenth century before Georgia became an open market for slaves.

By this time certain land restrictions had been removed and the consequent development of large plantations, for which the Negro was an economic necessity, greatly stimulated the slave market. During these early years the plantations that developed in the tidewater regions of coastal Georgia planted principally rice, a wet culture necessitating a high percentage of Negro laborers. Later, as additional acres of adjoining higher ground were planted in sugar cane and cotton, the demand for slaves persisted.

For more than a hundred years (1750–1858) this demand steadily increased, and it was the common habit to dump from 800 to 400 "prime Africans" on the Savannah market. Under these conditions Georgia, and more particularly the coastal region, was being supplied with Africans when much of older America was already sufficiently supplied or oversupplied with native born slaves bred for the domestic trade. Thus in many regions the long period of white contact was beginning to obscure tribal customs when Africans were being brought in great numbers to Georgia soil.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

INTRODUCTION

175 Although in 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited slave importation directly from Africa and in 1808 the Federal Constitution made the African slave trade unlawful, the favorable topography of the Georgia coast encouraged smuggling. The tidewater coastline and large navigable rivers penetrating for miles into the interior facilitated the landing of cargo. Consequently illegal slave traffic flourished in this region until 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* landed its cargo on Georgia soil.

Newspaper advertisements indicate that a large proportion of these early cargoes came from the Gambia River and Niger River sections; later the coast from the Congo River to the southern end of Portuguese West Africa was the base of operation. Accounts of various explorers' travels through Africa at that time, however, indicate that native traders frequently collected their slave cargoes from interior sections and shipped them from the west coast of Africa. Although to the white man, Negroes of an average cargo might have seemed similar in type, it is possible that in many instances they were brought from widely separated regions.

101 The coastal Negroes of Georgia are sometimes called Gullahs, although in general parlance the term is applied only to the Negroes of coastal South Carolina. Because of the similarity in type and speech, however, it is sometimes loosely extended to include the Georgia coastal Negroes as well. The place name, Geechee, derived from Ogeechee River, near Savannah, is also used locally to designate the Negroes of this district.

175 The coastal plantations that absorbed the slave traffic were remote from one another. The jungle swamps of the low country and the wide expanses of water separating the coastal islands made communication difficult among the plantation laborers of this section. With the continued ar-
(178) rival of Africans to these isolated plantation communities, native ceremonies and customs were renewed or exchanged.

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

INTRODUCTION

175 178 177 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs intensified the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept intact much of his racial heritage. 121 For these reasons the student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 128 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

771 hundred, are deeply religious and lay great stress on being
(162) "Christian people." Many of the older inhabitants were formerly slaves on a large plantation on St. Catherines
● (175) Island. After the War between the States many of these
(361) Negroes moved to White Bluff, built their homes, reared their families, and have lived to see two generations reach maturity. With all their fervent Christian doctrines the old people have an unwavering faith in many of the beliefs taught them by their grandparents. A few remember their ancestors who were brought from Africa on slave ships.

461 The younger group seem carefree as they perform their tasks in the cool part of the morning. It is not unusual to
883 see several young men lying on a shady porch resting or happily engaged in a card game as early as ten o'clock on a summer morning. These young people have little faith in
(789) the practices of their elders, but they believe profoundly in the power of certain charms to affect luck and love.[8]

115 Having heard that Sophie Davis was one of the oldest persons in the community, we visited her and found her cordial in her reception. Sophie * does not know her exact age, but was eight at the time of the war. She is very short and very stout with gray hair and a very large smiling face. The day we saw her she wore a cotton print dress with gray predominating. Her sparkling eyes expressed her interest in current happenings of the community, and when she laughed, her eyes became mere slits and her shoulders shook.

824 Indicating a small bush growing beside the doorway of her little cabin, Sophie told us, "Some uh duh folks heah sho belieb in some queah tings. Yuh see dis lill bush—it call
(777) Cherokee an mos uh duh folks yuh plants it at duh doe. It bring um good luck.[34c] Lot uh medicine an cuos is made
(757) frum udduh roots and herbs an some uh duh folks uses um wen dey's sick."[48]

(757) We inquired as to the kind of herbs used.

---

* *Sophie Davis, White Bluff.*

133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah;
from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St.
Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
133 only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port
Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets
curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on
the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and
wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and
surf.

The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
131 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and vis-
177 itors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as
the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They
serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily
131 by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea
Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole
language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in
many ways this book tells their story too.

For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
175 Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
567 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the
rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

175 Sherman's famous Special Field Order No. 15 set aside for the former
567 slaves "the islands from Charleston south [and] the abandoned rice
fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea." Within
175 weeks black homesteaders were happily farming their own plots on
423 Edisto, Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands. By September, President
Andrew Johnson had nullified Sherman's order. Many freedmen were
dispossessed, but others tenaciously held on to their lands and passed
them on to their descendants. Some even managed to buy more land at
the end of the nineteenth century as whites again abandoned the islands
after years of feeble cotton prices and a series of killer hurricanes. For
361 the first half of the twentieth century blacks continued to be in the
majority on the Sea Islands, and land values continued to be low.

For generations the Sea Islanders lived under the same hot sun,
182 surrounded by the same sea and salt marsh, forming a barrier that
433 isolated them from the mainland. For generations fishermen flung their
nets into creeks and marshes and ocean for crabs, shrimp, and fish; and
they gathered oysters and clams. These supplied both local markets
and their own kitchens. For generations islanders cultivated their own
little plots of land. Farmers hoed the loamy soil of the islands to produce
crops of beans, peas, and cotton. First there was the planting,
then the weeding, then the reaping. In the winter women sewed clothes
and made quilts; the men looked for work ashore. In the spring they
started the cycle over from the beginning—the planting, the weeding,
the reaping.

The years passed: the young grew old and the old died. And the
planting, seeding, and reaping, and the fishing, shrimping, and crabbing
went on. And each spring the cycle started over again. Each year
was like the year before. Each generation was like the generation before.
For generations there were the same prayers and the same hopes,
the same faith and the same fear, the same work and the same result.
[567] For generations there was the same old, hard legacy of slavery that
robbed men and women of their honor, a legacy visited upon the
children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren, a legacy
against which honest hard work seemed useless, a legacy so old it took
its place among natural phenomena like the wind and the rain.

It was not an easy life; but it was a self-sufficient life adapted to the
182 environment, a life shaped by a rich folk culture. Cut off from the
[178] mainland, generations of Sea Islanders preserved their cultural heritage,
reflecting both continuity with Africa and creativity in the New World.

Demography

•175 [103] The Sea Islands were the homes of Indians before the Europeans and Africans came to America, and thus the region is characterized by names like Wadmalaw, Sampit, Santee, Yamassee, Pee Dee, Winyah, Waccamaw, and Yacamaw. After the forced migration in the early 1700s of the Yamassee and other Indians, the coastal islands became the home of African slaves, a few white planters, and ex-slaves and their free descendants.[10] 175 162 567 Not many whites or Europeans inhabited the islands during the slave trade, and in some places white permanent residents are still rare.[11] Federal census figures for the coastal areas have until very recently shown high concentrations of African and African-American populations. For example, 1830 figures revealed an overwhelmingly black population. The Georgetown district of South Carolina at that time contained 1,940 whites and 18,000 blacks. A grand jury presentment held during the fall term of 1835 complained that the black-to-white ratio in Georgetown was becoming unwieldy and insisted that something had to be done. Noting that 10 masters of 1,700 slaves were permanently absent from their property, the jury went on to object that there were only 40 proprietors to oversee a black population of 15,000 on the Tide Swamp plantation.[12] On many of the islands the only white persons present were the owners, and in many cases there was no overseer.[13]

175 567 In 1798 the Georgia Constitution prohibited direct slave importation from Africa, and the Constitution of the United States made the slave trade illegal after 1808. Nevertheless, the navigable ocean recesses of the islands and the turbulent rivers leading miles into the interior facilitated the landing of slaves brought directly from Africa. Slave trading thus continued to flourish in the coastal region as late as 1858, when the slave ship *Wanderer* brought new slaves to the Georgia coast. By this time inland parts of the United States were sufficiently supplied with generations of native-born African-Americans, so the coastal cities and the Sea Islands absorbed the newly arrived African population. [178] The continued addition of Africans to communities with few, if any, Europeans and an already dense African population made possible the reinforcement and perpetuation of African traditions in these areas.[14]

175 162 By 1880 the federal census revealed that Charleston County con-

162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
(175) munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census
for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of
the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the
data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in
1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the
surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and
the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
[161] 1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population in-
crease, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year
between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to
the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the
new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the im-
migration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that
blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston
County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial com-
161 position, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100
or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat
obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea
Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrializa-
tion, and these are not among the most remote and economically dis-
tressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to
[464] remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that
provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and
Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth,
as is shown in Table 2.

The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to ma-
161 jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
177 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Is-
179 lands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4).A James Island,
situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and
is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabi-
tants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the
162 island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively
stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A,[For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

464 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40
177 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the
immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250
total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw,
or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations,
but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the
Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as
compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local
Holiday Inn.[19]

434 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain
among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically
735 distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median
family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's
population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the
2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the
poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related
not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack
464 of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In
871 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken
on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade
education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea
Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the
labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household
workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled
hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years.
When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was
175 owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters
567 whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the
Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of
acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops.
They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the
federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if
they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have
made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government
and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks
wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

423 •175 tion, General W. T. Sherman issued his famous Field Order No. 15: "The islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. Johns river, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the Negroes."[22]

175 241 [243) From the earliest days the islanders tended to be self-sufficient agriculturally. The landowners—black or white—harvested mainly indigo and long-staple cotton, commodities that thrived well on the rich island soil. Rice, by 1724 one of the most profitable staple commodities in the mainland coastal areas,[23] was not grown to any great extent on the islands.[24]

175 243 171 Peter Wood writes convincingly that the West Africans were primarily responsible for the economic success of the flourishing rice crops in the Carolina territory. The cultivation, growth, and processing of rice is an old tradition in West Africa. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rice was grown in most West African areas, and especially heavily near the Gambia River. In the Congo-Angola region, a white explorer once noted that rice was so plentiful that it brought no price at all. During this period West Africans actually sold rice to the slave traders to stock their ships.[25]

243 171 Unlike the Europeans, then, who knew little about rice, the transplanted Africans were widely familiar with its cultivation. In fact, rice was so important a part of African culture that its growth and harvest were celebrated each year, just as the growing of yams was celebrated in "yam festivals."[26] In West Africa today there is still a kind of symbolism associated with rice and yams: they are much more than just food to be consumed.[27] Rice continues to be a primary food in both West Africa and the Sea Islands, and its preparation and offering tend to be expressions of fine taste and "good eating."[28]

248 Until recent years the primary Sea Island commodity was long-staple cotton, a crop that thrives only in light, sandy, saltwater lands. Because of its fine silky texture, it brought excellent prices on the world market, and it was grown along the Atlantic coast from the Santee River of South Carolina to the Florida Everglades.[29] The rapid expansion of cotton production on the islands, as elsewhere, was a major factor in the great demand for West African slaves to work the fields. Perhaps because cotton was a crop new to the slaves, or because the growth and harvest of an inedible crop did not offer the familiar gratification associated with rice, or merely because of the connection

113 31. See Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit*.

32. See Finnegan, *Limba Stories;* and Cronise and Ward, *Cunnie Rabbit.*

33. See Harris, *Nights with Uncle Remus;* and Martha Warren Beckwith, *Jamaica Anansi Stories* (New York: American Folklore Society, 1924).

34. See Dorson, *African Folklore;* and Parsons, *Folklore of the Sea Islands.*

Chapter 4

101 1. On *Gullah* see Wood, *Black Majority*, p. 335. For *Geechee* see Turner, *Af-*
175 *ricanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 194. As many as 70 percent of the slaves brought to
● the Sea Islands may have come from Angola. As far back as 1822, the Charleston City
567 Council regarded the word *Gullah* as a corruption of *Angola*. John G. Williams wrote
in the *Charleston Sunday News*, 10 February 1895: "Gullah is very probably a corrup-
tion of Angola, shortened to Gola, a country of West Africa, and part of Lower
Guinea, from which a great many negroes were brought to this country in the days of
the slave trade. I remember hearing the old plantation negroes before the war speak of
one as a 'Gullah nigger' and another as a 'Guinea nigger.'" When members of the
[829] Georgia Writers Project of 1940 asked an elderly man if he could remember any of the
people brought over from Africa, he replied: "'Yas, I know heaps ub um. Deah wuz
"Golla" John Wiley, "Golla" Jim Bayfield—he wuz bought by Mahse Charles Lamar,
and he sole im to Mr. McMullen. Den deah wuz "Golla" Jack, "Golla" Tom, "Golla"
Silvie, "Golla" Charles Carr. . . . All duh people wut come frum Africa aw obushseas
wuz call "Golla," and dey talk wuz call "Golla" talk'" (*Drums and Shadows*, p. 66).

000 2. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*.

3. Water is symbolic of life, happiness, and goodwill on the Sea Islands, and
823 water from certain areas on the islands is felt to have curative properties. Thus Francis's reply is not without some merit.

197 4. For early studies on Gullah see George Phillip Krapp, "The English of the
American Negro," *American Mercury* 2 (June 1924): 190–95; Reed Smith, *Gullah*,
113 Bulletin of the University of South Carolina, no. 190 (Columbia: *University of South Carolina Press*, 1926); and H. L. Mencken, *The American Language: Supplement II* (New York: Knopf, 1942).

5. Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Black Border* (Columbia, S.C.: The State Co., 1922), p. 10.

6. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 296.

(114) 7. To take one interesting example of nonstandard speech, Ian Hancock has recently informed me that an African-Seminole variety of English is spoken in Oklahoma and Texas. This mixture is unsurprising: Africans and Indians have coexisted since the beginning of foreign migrations into America.

8. See Irma Cunningham, "A Syntactic Analysis of Sea Island Creole (Gullah)." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan; 1970); Nichols, *Linguistic Change in Gullah;* Joyner, "Slave Folklife," or *Down by the Riverside*, pp. 196–224; and Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah."

9. See DeCamp, "Toward a Generative Analysis."

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

121 mend ways of dealing with reality. The Gullahs defined life in sacred terms, an inherited African legacy.[4] Their introduction to Christianity reinforced this sense of the sacred but also raised questions regarding contradictions inherent in the teachings. Slaves who organized the 1822 revolt attempt in Charleston, called the Vesey Conspiracy, based their right to rebellion on several principles, among which were certain Christian beliefs extracted from the Bible. Yet slave masters and clergymen used the same Bible (albeit different texts) to explain *their* "right" to keep blacks in bondage. Both groups' beliefs determined their interpretations of scriptures, reflecting diametrically opposed interests and attitudes. Furthermore, as the more isolated Gullahs became "Christians," their spiritual orientation continued to foster independent ways of thinking. This was demonstrated by the Gullah's spiritual autonomy, in the structuring of their community-culture, their sense of morality, and sense of themselves as a people.

In this volume, I have tried to strike a balance between "pure" religion (for its own sake, other worldly or transcendental) and applied religion (its functional or empirical use) because both were practiced among slaves who ultimately adopted Christianity. Yet evidence sometimes points to a cloudy qualitative difference between the two. Some Gullah slaves accepted Christianity at face value as presented by missionaries and masters. Most did not, but instead blended transcendental aspects of Christianity with the everyday, paramount reality of their human experiences and aspirations.

Awareness of the empirical impact of religious instruction, and in some cases the lack thereof, is important for understanding how and why folk religion flourished among the Gullahs. The religious instruction move-
121 ment also provides a way of contemplating the reasons for Christian in-
175 struction on the part of whites. Almost from the beginning a few whites, despite much opposition, attempted to Christianize slaves. Some slaves responded warmly. Yet a concerted process of slave conversion among the majority of coastal Carolina slaves did not begin in earnest by whites until around 1830. Even then, the way was sometimes filled with pitfalls created by a reluctant master class and disinterested clergy. Furthermore, the culturally and geographically isolated black population, whose main spiritual tradition still rested on Africanity, showed only lukewarm interest for some time. Certainly there was exposure to Christianity before 1830—from acculturated, privileged blacks and occasional spiritu-

121 175 ally moved ministers and planters. Also the Great Awakening of the colonial era touched South Carolina even if it did not linger there for very long. And early Methodists actively tried bringing Christianity to the Gullahs, but were under bans of proscription as an antislavery denomination. Hence, prior to the movement begun by the Methodist Missionary Society in 1829, most slaves working in the fields received their "Christian" instruction from fellow slaves. When slaves accepted Christianity under Methodist and later Baptist tutelage, they embraced it selectively, fusing Christianity with African traditions to create Gullah folk religion. This religion was a means of explaining experiential reality for the Gullahs on sacred and secular levels. If community was the base or substance of Gullah life, spirituality (a more appropriate term, I think, than religion) was the superstructure upon which the foundation was posited.

The final area of investigation in my broadly considered three-tier thematic construct, is resistance—perhaps the most debated issue in the North American bondage experience. There is a tendency to interpret resistance in its strictest sense—as bloodletting or flight to freedom. These are obvious means of rebellion, and from the beginning, African-Carolinians were a restless, insurgent group. This study is a further comment on that spirit of resistance. Yet I primarily delve into what are in my opinion equally meaningful ways of analyzing resistance to enslavement. The Denmark Vesey Conspiracy denotes the end (as far as historical knowledge goes) of concerted efforts at black liberation among the Gullahs. The revelation of the Conspiracy and subsequent debates over the value of religious instruction (since the event was planned under the guise of religion) ushered in, paradoxically, a movement to convert the slave population in South Carolina. From outward appearances the Vesey Conspiracy marked the end of organized black resistance in South Carolina. This is the juncture at which I believe the question of resistance takes on expanded meaning. I attempt to demonstrate that resistance against white power and hegemony was conspicuous in the Gullahs' sense of cultural autonomy, authoritative, creative community-building, and their spiritual disengagement from the slaveocracy's version of Christian teachings. The means and methods of their accomplishment are viewed through the Gullah community and folk religion.

121 127 I have benefited greatly from the works of previous writers. W. E. B. DuBois was among the first to discuss elements of continuity between

slaves from the Angolan ports.[3] Her theory implies an ethnic identification 101
retained by BaKongo peoples.

Another theory also suggests that the name was group-initiated, yet
from a different ethnic source. "Golla" was used in the eighteenth century
while "Gullah" was a nineteenth-century term for slaves in the coastal
region of South Carolina. A very large group of Africans from the Liberian
hinterland were called Golas, sometimes spelled "Goulah." Chapter
1 discusses their importation into the Carolina Lowcountry and Georgia
in large numbers during a period of rapid growth and settlement. One 114
early twentieth-century white South Carolinian, Reed Smith, wrote extensively 174
about Gullah dialect, maintaining that the term refers to the 101
Golas of Liberia. His suggestion alone proves nothing. But further research
demonstrates its plausibility, or at least the possibility of two
complimentary original derivations. During the colonial era, Africans from 175
the Windward Coast (Sierra Leone and Liberia) entered Charleston and
heavily contributed to the coastal and Sea Island population. Golas and
neighboring Gizzis (also called Kizzis or Giggis) were two of the largest
African ethnic groups preyed upon by domineering Mende, Vai, Mandingas,
and others. Methodist missionaries went to Liberia in the 1840s
to convert the "Goulah nation." The spelling of Gullah and Goulah have 174
obvious similarities. Additionally, missionaries were struck by "Goulah"
Africans' use of English, as Northerners were by the Gullah speech.
"The native Africans never use the personal pronoun of the third person
feminine," wrote one missionary in 1843. ". . . it is always 'he, him.' "
Similarly, Elizabeth Botume wrote of her initial incomprehension of the 177
Gullah dialect during the Civil War, stating that her head grew "dizzy" 174
trying to understand it. Worst of all for Botume was the confusion regarding
family relations: "I never knew whether they were talking of
boys or girls. They spoke of all as 'him.' "[4]

Even more interesting observations come from Lorenzo Turner's *Africanisms 174
in the Gullah Dialect*.[5] There are a number of problems with 114
Turner's study. Yet even critics admit that in a "fair number of instances
the derivation and meaning found for a Gullah name are reasonably convincing."[6]
Turner includes in his list of African words *gala* (*gola*, *gula*)
which he takes to mean "Gullah, a dialect spoken by Negroes in coastal
South Carolina and Georgia, one who speaks Gullah." He does not list
an African homologue for *gala*, but defines its African equivalent as "gola
(. . . gula, gura) a Liberian tribe and its language . . . also see ngola, a

174 main, but other elements of religion and ritual were not. Sacred medicine in the form of conjuration and healing is one example. According to Thompson "Nowhere is Kongo-Angola influence on the New World more pronounced, more profound than in black traditional cemeteries in the South. The nature of the objects that decorate the graves there . . . reveals a strong continuity . . . a restatement of the Kongo notion of the tomb as a charm for the persistence of the spirit. . . ." Thompson notes the strong sense of communion with ancestors among Kongo peoples and manifestations of this retentive element in the New World. Additionally, the BaKongo concepts of "bad magic" play a significant role in New World attitudes toward the supernatural.[14] All of these elements were part of Kongo sacred traditions. Thus, a complex pattern of convergence of at least two African cultural regions developed in coastal Carolina, creating a socioreligious community among the Gullahs.

● 175 567 Sea Island Gullahs received little attention in antebellum days. On the contrary, while as laborers they produced some of the world's finest cotton, Sea Island slavery was a very impersonal type of bondage. Most slaveholders did not directly oversee their plantations, nor live on the "unhealthy" Islands for more than a season. But the advent of civil conflict brought some immediate changes. Early in the war the Sea Island region was occupied by Northern forces, and widespread interest centered on these slaves whom the "aristocracy" left behind in their hasty flight. It was in the Sea Islands that the so-called "Port Royal experiment," supposedly a test of black initiative and valor, was tried.[15]

[797] Northern reaction to the Gullahs was mixed. Not all of the "missionaries" who embarked on the Sea Island enterprise were convinced that efforts at "uplifting" Gullahs would succeed. "It is the opinion of all who know the South," wrote Arthur Sumner of Cambridge, Mass., from St. Helena Island, "that the negroes of these Sea Islands are the most degraded slaves South of Dixie's Line . . . a meaner, more ungrateful and unhandsome lot than those of our district I pray that I shall never see."[16]

Undoubtedly Northerners such as Sumner were completely unprepared to find such "foreign" and "pure" blacks, who had an initial suspicion about the motives of white people no matter what their political affiliation. Yet other Northerners felt differently about the Gullahs and
[197] grew to truly appreciate them. Their distinct form of speech was more than a separate dialect which linguists and folklorists later attempted to

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

capture. To some whites, this language was a gifted, colorful, and picturesque form of expression, so original and peculiar to the Gullahs that it was beyond emulation. In 1863, David Thorpe, then a teacher on occupied St. Helena Island, wrote to his father-in-law, "Old John" Mooney, describing among other things, the force with which Gullahs used their limited vocabulary: 175 567 197

> If you ask a man how he came from any place, he will say, "I took my foot." If you ask him about any work he has on hand, when he is to do it, he says, "I will strike in on that tomorrow and fight on with him till I get him done, den drop back on the next thing them is."[17]

Gullah musical ability was noted even in antebellum years. None who visited and wrote about the Sea Islands before or during the Civil War failed to comment on the rhapsodic tunes which the Gullah boatmen sang as their oars maintained a graceful, timely rhythm when striking the waters. And perhaps no one, except Gullahs themselves, was more stirred by the melancholy beauty of their "prayer-songs" than the Methodist missionaries who, after 1830, went among them to proselytize. But even a Northern skeptic like Arthur Sumner was moved by the musical power the Gullahs displayed, as indicated by his sublime description of July 4, 1862, on St. Helena: 175 533 [797]

> We had a glorious celebration of the Fourth. All the negroes on this island were assembled, and marched in a melodious procession, bearing green branches, and singing "Roll, Jordan, Roll" down through the beautiful shady road by the old Episcopal Church. Around this picturesque building, in front of the platform they gathered in a great crowd under the moss-grown oaks, while our majestic gridiron waved above them. General Saxton and one or two others made brief remarks. The height of the festivities was music and dried herring.
>
> Oh, I wish you and all my friends could have heard these Africs sing! I never listened to more impressive music than this. The singing was intrinsicially good; the songs strange and beautiful and their swaying to and fro with the melody, seemed to have a sort of oceanic grandeur in it.[18]

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought a flurry of interest and writing related to the Gullahs which continued through the 1930s. Folklorists, linguists, anthropologists, musicologists, sociologists, and novelists began celebrating the Sea Island region as a quaint, mysterious, picturesque corner of America. Some of this literature remains useful. Most of the scholarship of the period badly needs placing in a more modern, sensitive perspective, because it is dated and full of the 114

114 sociological bias reflected in the "white-to-black" method of interpreting African-American culture. Willie Lee Rose's *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, written in 1964, is a fine work which demonstrates the early Reconstruction era and the problems African-Americans faced as new citizens. Yet Rose's book discusses the land question and Northern "missionaries" more than Gullah culture, which we only glimpse. More recently, Charles Joyner has written a historical recreation of the Gullah rice community, All Saints on the Waccamaw River. Using interdisciplinary techniques, Joyner offers a detailed reconstruction of daily life in this Georgetown District plantation society. Our works are similar in that we attempt to express historical appreciation of Gullah culture, and we make use of similar sources. Beyond that, our books differ considerably, especially in terms of focus, themes, structure, and style.[19]

121 771 All who went among the Gullahs were struck by the significance of religion in nearly every aspect of their social and cultural existence. Yet no writer has attempted to characterize or interpret, from a cultural perspective, the spiritual components of Gullah life. This study represents such an effort. It has been a thought-provoking, engrossing study of social cohesion. In addition to considerations of a historical nature, this book was embarked upon because of a deep, subjective interest in the Gullahs and their fascinating example of group identity, adaptability, and black resistance on a militant and cultural level. I hope the book offers a useful means of discerning, capturing, and understanding the phenomenon that characterized and gave vitality to their spiritual and communal life.

175 No event polarized public opinion on the issue of religious instruction of slaves in South Carolina more than the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy of 1822. This attempt by Charleston slaves to "make a desperate struggle to recover their rights" was planned in the large African Methodist Church in that city. The incident created two well-defined and opposing views regarding religious instruction. On the one hand, panic-stricken Carolinians insisted that religious instruction of the slaves cease altogether. Yet others calmly counseled that if religion played a role at all in the Conspiracy, it was either a misguided interpretation of Christianity, inspired by Northern clergymen infiltrating the South, or was the result of "superstitious," "primitive" notions taught by native Africans. Some within this latter group argued that not only was it the *duty* of planters and

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

churchmen to convert slaves, but that a concerted program conducted by "Southern men with Southern principles," was the best insurance against slave insurrection. Both views gained adherents as 1831 brought Nat Turner's Rebellion, which went well past the planning stages and had an even clearer relationship to Christianity and biblical imagery. The Turner Rebellion made it seemingly more evident that measures had to be taken to avert disruption of the South's peculiar institution.[20]

Once frenzy over the Vesey Conspiracy had abated somewhat, the South Carolina Methodist Conference, supported by a few influential planters, became the first denomination to openly advocate religious instruction for slaves, and to actively engage in a program of plantation missions. Gradually, often begrudgingly, other churches followed. By 1845 support for religious instruction was a majority opinion in the state. By the end of the antebellum era many slaveholders credited Christian teaching with quelling a rebellious spirit in the slave quarters. Many planters who once doubted or were openly hostile to the benefits of Christian instruction viewed it as essential to plantation management. Clergymen and missionaries who took interest in the slaves' spiritual welfare extolled the success of the "great work." Churches prided themselves on overcoming planter opposition and criticism from Northern brethren. In their eyes the accomplishment was threefold: (1) a "veil of ignorance" was lifted from the spiritual cognizance of the bondspeople, (2) the Southern religious sector fulfilled its duty to God by saving black souls, and (3) the status quo was preserved by making slaves satisfied with their place in the social order:

> In reviewing the history of this society [the Methodist Missionary Society] and its operation since its organization . . . it is a matter of no ordinary gratification to remember that we hold the honor of having been pioneers in the missions to the African race. It is likewise a source of peculiar and grateful satisfaction, that the progress of these labours instead of awakening fears as to their political effects, have, on the contrary, dispelled such apprehensions, and shown that the teachings of the gospel are in the highest degree compatible with our institutions, and afford additional security to the public peace. While our missionaries have been unfolding to the negro race the riches of the grace revealed in Jesus Christ and opening up to their faith and hope the glories of an eternal life, they have been likewise teaching from the same inspired record that the way to the attainment of that life is by obedience and fidelity, by contentment and holy living. Spurning the doctrines of a false philanthropy, they have been content with the truth of divine revelation, and acknowledge no "higher law."[21]

● 175 If the results of Christian instruction were measured by numbers of rebellions following Vesey and Turner, it could be said that insofar as status quo proponents were concerned, such instruction of bondspeople was eminently successful. Slaves appeared to accept Protestantism taught in a spirit purposely antithetical to their will to freedom. Emphasis was on authority, dependence on future rewards and punishments for suffering or wrongdoing on earth, and a profound inequality between master and slave. This seemed especially the case in the Sea Islands. There no widespread slave conspiracy or rebellion was known of, and Christianity appeared well entrenched by the time of freedom.

121 This study examines the Christian conversion process among the Gul-
lahs in an effort to understand these slaves' interpretation of Christianity
175 and the motives behind attempts to Christianize them. It is hypothesized
that Gullah slaves of coastal Carolina used Christianity as an ideology
with strong connotations supporting their sense of freedom. Early efforts
to resist bondage, represented fusing Christianity with Africanity to pro-
vide a militant nationalism articulated by the black rebels of Charleston.
Failure of that Conspiracy shook the Gullah community and may have
facilitated a new adaptive structure in which slaves selectively employed
Christianity in ways important to their own social existence. Slaves con-
tinued to oppose bondage, not with physical force, but by creating a
strong, religious collective which shielded them from a sense of alien-
ation. But their experiences were also based on an African world view
and cultural structure though conceptually expressed in Christian terms.
In the new religion, the slaves found some features reminiscent of their
African socioreligious past. It also offered an explanation for their histor-
121 ical situation, which inspired currents of hope. On the Sea Islands, Gul-
lahs partly used the moral teachings of Christ as a basis for community
175 structure and organization. Yet they saw no contradiction in refusing to
797 blindly internalize everything they were taught. Thus Gullahs did not
trespass against their own moral sense or jeopardize their integrity as a
people struggling against oppression. Their retention of an African world
121 view enabled them to maintain an appreciation of life on a collective
level, striving to preserve the group consciousness that was a main ingre-
dient of African heritage. Hence Christian and African traditions helped
shape the resistance culture and plantation commonwealth that evolved
in the slave quarters. In this sense religious instruction of the slaves can-

CHAPTER I

Gullah Roots

175 The majority of the tribes of the Upper Guinea Coast were active participants in the Atlantic slave-trade. . . . But the Mandingas, Susus and Fulas stood well to the fore—partly because of their own key role in the slaving operations on the Upper Guinea Coast, and partly because they succeeded in reducing many of the littoral peoples and the inhabitants of the Futa Djalon to a state of vassalage, under the banner of Islam.*

But I must own to the shame of my own countrymen, that I was first kidnapped and betrayed by my own complexion, who were the first cause of my exile and slavery; but if there were no buyers there would be no sellers.**

Ethnic Origins and Carolina Preferences

European traders divided the African shoreline into Upper and Lower Guinea, although opinions differed on where the division occurred. In this study Upper Guinea refers to the area from the Senegal River north, called the Senegambia, to the Cross River south, termed the Slave Coast. Lower Guinea is south of the Slave Coast, to the Kongo-Angola region. Most Africans imported into South Carolina were taken from trading stations in four areas of the Guinea Coast. From Lower Guinea Africans mainly from the Kongo and Angola region comprised black cargoes destined for Charleston. From Upper Guinea they came from the land between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, present-day Gambia; from the

---

[113] *Walter Rodney, "African Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave-Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 436.

[113] **Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969; repr. from 1787 ed.), 12.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 Windward Coast, now Sierra Leone and Liberia; and from the Gold Coast, presently the Republic of Ghana. Few African ethnic groups were spared a tribute to slave coffles. Yet the littoral of the above areas and inhabitants living about 200 miles inland provided the majority of black cargoes destined for the Carolina coast.[1]

Gold Coast Africans were apparently the first black Carolinians. They were preferred by West Indian adventurers who initially settled Carolina and brought about 1,000 slaves with them. Often referred to as Coromantees (or Kromanti), after the coastal factory from which they were first shipped, most of these Africans, generally Akan and Ashanti peoples, were sold into bondage by powerful, coast-dwelling Fanti. Famous on West Indian plantations for their work habits, efficiency, and strength, Akan-Ashanti groups were also said to possess the haughty spirit that planters associated with rebelliousness. "The Coromantees are not only the best and most faithful of our slaves, but are really born heroes," wrote the governor of the Leeward Islands in 1701. He added that:

> there never was a rascal or coward of that nation, intrepid to the last degree. . . . My father, who had studied the genius and temper of all kinds of negroes for forty-five years . . . would say "no man deserved a Coromantee that would not treat him like a friend rather than a slave."[2]

Men who made voyages to the Guinea Coast concurred with and often fostered attitudes expressed toward Gold Coast Africans. John Atkins, a ship's surgeon, considered himself an "authority" on Africans. "Slaves differ in their goodness," he insisted, maintaining that "those from the Gold Coast are accounted best, being cleanest limbed, and more docile by our Settlements than others." But Atkins cautioned that Akan-Ashanti were also "more prompt to Revenge, and murder the Instruments of their Slavery, and also apter in means to compress it."[3]

Charleston merchants paid particular attention to the source of black cargoes. Although Gold Coast Africans sold at a premium, early Carolinian planters were forced to compete for them with West Indian sugar producers who usually got first choice. Second in favor were Africans from Angola. "We wish therefore you would send either to the Gold Coast or Angola," wrote one Charleston factor. "And there will not be this next Year Insuing Negroes Enough especially Gold Coast and Angola, for the Demand."[4] Peter Wood's study of blacks in colonial South Carolina argues effectively for a preponderance, by 1740, of "salt water"

Angolans over other ethnic groups. According to Wood, the 1730s was a time of massive slave importation and low natural increase. Over 50 percent of the slaves had been in the colony less than ten years, and approximately 70 percent of the black population was originally from Angola where the trade was mainly conducted by the Portuguese.[5]

The diversity of Portuguese slave-trading policy and their concentration on penetrating Africa's interior partly accounts for a paucity of records on their trade.[6] At any rate studies do indicate that while slave traders were not usually compelled to go into the interior in the eighteenth century, they occasionally went as far as Mozambique, largely by sea. Dieudonne Rinchon, a well-known French scholar and sometimes apologist for the slave trade, provided evidence of the expanse of Portuguese activity:

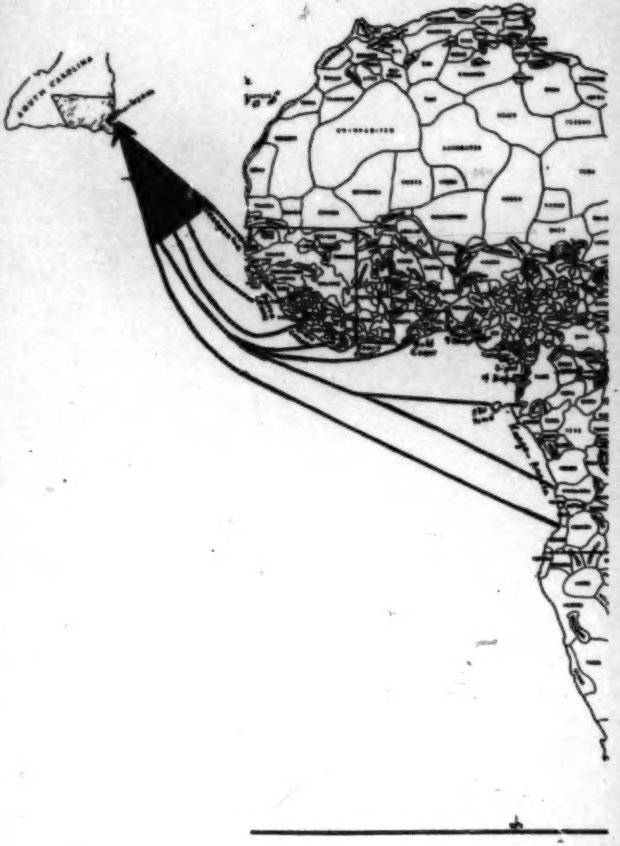
> Les esclaves exportés sont principalement des Ambundus, (Ovimbundu) des gens de Mbamba et de Mbata, et pour le reste des Nègres due Haute-Congo achetés par les Bamfumgunu et les Bateke du Pool [the Stanley Pool]. Quelques-uns de ces esclaves viennet de fort loin dans l'in-terieur. Le capitaine négrier Degrandpré achète à Cabinda une Négresse qui lui paraît assez familière avec les Blancs, ou du moins qui ne témoigne à leur vue ni surprise, ni frayeur; frappé de cette sécurité peu ordinaire, le négrier lui en demande la cause. Elle répond qu'elle a vu précédement des Blancs dans une autre terre, où le soleil se lève dans l'eau, et non comme au Congo où il se cache dans la mer; et elle ajoute en montrant le levant *monizi monambu*, j'ai vu le bord de la mer; elle a été en chemin, *gonda cacata*, beaucoup de lune. Ce récit semble confirmer les dires de Dapper que parfois des esclaves du Mozambique sont vendus au Congo.[7]

Information provided by Rinchon's informant is supported by recent scholarship. Long-distance trade routes in Central Africa were a direct result of the emergence of Portuguese activity according to Jan Vansina. Trade around the Stanley Pool touched a number of regional water networks. Slave recruitment extended as far as what is now Shaba Province in Zaire. Furthermore, scholars investigating African retentions in Gullah dialect identify Ovimbundu, BaKongo, Mbundu, Mayombe, and others as Bantu-speaking peoples who greatly contributed patterns of speech to the Sea Island patois. With the exception of Mozambique(ans), most of these people lived no more than 200 miles from the Coast.[8]

Ethnic characteristics as perceived by white Carolinians labeled Angolan slaves as "docile" and "comely" but not particularly strong. Hence they supposedly made better house slaves than the presumably more sturdy Gold Coast Africans. Bantu-speaking Africans were also consid-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 33]

102
•175


SOUTH CAROLINA

Cultural map of Africa.

● 175 ered especially apt at mechanical arts and trades. Categories related to temperament and labor capability were subjective, having more to do with need than reality. At a time when Carolina's economy was diverse and Africans were engaged in numerous occupations, perceptions may have suited availability. Yet the theory that Africans contributed skill and know-how to Carolina's early economy has much validity. In any case, events leading up to the Stono Rebellion of 1739 caused white Carolinians to alter their attitudes toward their servile population. The Bantu family of Africa was ethnically diverse, and from Angola to Mozambique contained a variety of physical types. Yet they possessed many common customs and values. In Carolina, cultural and linguistic homogeneity, coupled with mounting white repression, inspired a reputedly "docile" people to rebel against the "Instruments of their Slavery." Thus to Kongo-Angolans, Carolinians attributed still another adage—the tendency toward flight and rebellion.[9]

At the time of the Stono Rebellion, there were around 39,000 blacks and 20,000 whites in South Carolina. Fear and anxiety followed the uprising, culminating in a prohibitive duty on slave imports. During this nearly ten-year moratorium the trade was reduced to a mere trickle, bringing to a close what can be considered the first of three phases in the history of the African slave trade to the colony and the state.[10]

Cessation of the transatlantic slave trade found the majority of South Carolina's black laborers, between 80–90 percent, concentrated in parishes closest to Charleston. The sparsely settled Sea Island parish of St. Helena, located on the southern frontier, had only forty-two slaves in 1720. Even by the 1730s when settled parishes were bulging with Africans and rice shifted from a competing export to the primary agricultural concern, growth and settlement of the coastal frontier remained minimal. Given the preponderance of Kongo-Angolans in the slave population, most slaves in the Sea Island region were undoubtedly from this group. St. Helena Parish was close to Spanish territory and possible freedom. It was a congregating area for slaves, and a number of bondsmen from there were known to have been involved in the Stono Rebellion.[11] Naturally, as the Sea Islands developed, planters relied on their supply of country-born and more acculturated Africans to oversee labor operation on frontier plantations. Hence early African cultural influences of Akan-Ashanti and Bantu were present. During the next generation, following the slave trade moratorium, two developments added to African cultural

175 patterns. These dual occurrences encouraged rapid settlement of the islands south of Charleston, and created labor demands that brought a resurgence of African importations, ushering in the second phase of the Carolina trade.

First was the geographical change of rice-producing areas. In the 1750s inland swamps, which since the 1720s had been utilized for rice cultivation, were gradually deserted in favor of tidal and river swamps. These were better suited for growing rice because soil was more fertile and irrigation was more easily conducted. This discovery opened the remaining coastal frontier to settlement. Workers were not only needed for rice cultivation but also to clear away dense woods and growth prior to planting. Memory of the Stono Rebellion notwithstanding, large-scale use of white labor was never seriously considered. Not only was such labor scarce and expensive, but tidal swamps were infested with malaria-carrying mosquitos, and the summers there were so hot and unhealthy that whites convinced themselves they could not endure such conditions.[12] Rather than relinquish dependency on African workers, South Carolinians altered their ethnic preferences.

The second factor responsible for renewed interest in forced black labor was the cultivation of indigo in the Sea Islands. Great Britain needed large quantities of indigo for its textile industry and encouraged indigo production in the colony. But despite the prospect of a guaranteed market, and even though indigo was found growing in a wild state in Caro-
175 lina, no commercial possibilities were realized until 1748. The change
249 was precipitated by a young Sea Island woman, Eliza Lucas (later Eliza
[242] Lucas Pinckney), who from 1742 to 1744 engaged in a series of experiments. She crossbred and developed the plant through seed selection and
[386] from a West Indian indigo maker learned the difficult process of properly extracting dye from the plant. Indigo grew well in the Sea Islands and soon became the most favored commodity with the British government.
[556] Next to rice, indigo was also the most bountiful source of wealth in the province, laying the foundation for many Sea Island fortunes while further enriching British textile capitalists. Commodity output of rice and
175 indigo during this period of economic advancement was matched by heavy
567 African importation. From 1740 to the eve of the War for Independence, South Carolina imported over 50,000 Africans into the colony.[13] This middle period of the slave trade provided the Sea Island region with numerically dominant African ethnic groups who strongly impacted Gullah religious culture and communal organization.

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 Strong preferences and equally fervent disdain for certain Africans continued to dominate Carolinian rationale, but Kongo-Angolans were no longer considered desirable. Instead, Africans from Senegambia were put on a par with those of the Gold Coast. Newspaper advertisements and private correspondence provide insight into this preference. The most influential Charleston factor was Henry Laurens. Carolina-born and British-educated, Laurens established himself as a successful merchant and planter in his early twenties. Laurens was a "particular friend" of Richard Oswald, a wealthy British merchant. Oswald owned the British slave factory on Bance Island in the Sierra Leone River. During the middle period of the trade (1750–1787), Laurens handled Oswald's Sierra Leone cargoes in Charleston for a 10 percent commission. Laurens was careful and methodical in preserving communications. His records reveal a sense of prevailing attitudes toward African origins. In one correspondence, Laurens urged a West Indian associate to send portions of his cargoes to Carolina where Africans who were "healthy and in good flesh would find a ready market." Laurens cautioned, however, that the quality of the slaves should be high, at least two-thirds of them men eighteen to twenty-five years of age and that "there must not be a Callabar (Igbo) amongst them. Gold Coast and Gambia are best, next to them the Windward Coast are preferred to Angolas. . . . Pray observe that our people like tall slaves best for our business and strong withal."[14]

Cargoes from the Slave Coast (Dahomey and the Ivory Coast) were rarely noted by Laurens or mentioned in newspaper advertisements. When ships from these areas did arrive, an explanation in the announcement was called for: "Just arrived in the ship Marlborough . . . 300 Negroes, directly from Whydah, a country greatly preferred to any other thru-out the West Indies and inferior to none on the Coast of Africa."[15]

Callabar Africans were shunned by Carolinians and consistently rejected by Laurens. "Callabar slaves won't go down when others can be had," Laurens warned a British merchant in 1755. That same year he also wrote to another correspondent discussing the deplorable conditions of the trade for Carolina merchants competing for Africans with West Indian planters. He asked for "stout healthy fellows . . . the country is not material if they are not from Callabar which slaves are quite out of repute from numbers in every cargo that have been sold with us destroying themselves."[16]

Among the many judgments Carolinians made about African ethnic groups—from supposed suicidal and melancholy tendencies of Callabars

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 to the height and strength of Senegambians, one characteristic predominated: the desirability of purchasing slaves familiar with rice cultivation. Upper Guinea and especially Senegambia was visited by Europeans before North American settlement. Some Europeans settled on African coasts and along rivers leading inland. Daniel Littlefield has made a strong case for colonial Carolina preference being based on Africans' knowledge of rice cultivation.[17]

Early explorers were impressed with Upper Guinea Africans' knowledge of grain cultivation, particularly their rice staple. In the Gambia region, Africans engaged in large-scale planting operations of corn, pepper, grains, and nuts, as well as "superior" cotton and indigo. Present-day Liberia was first called the Malaguetta Coast by the Portuguese because the Africans there cultivated malaguetta pepper. This pepper supposedly prevented dysentery and was used to season food given to Africans during the journey to America known as the Middle Passage. Later the name Malaguetta Coast was dropped and the term Grain Coast was adopted. Before the end of the eighteenth century the Grain Coast was synonomous with rice producing and referred to as the Rice Coast. Following establishment of the slave trade, some Africans shipped to America had been employed previously at slave factories or in the homes of English businessmen residing on the coasts. These "castle slaves" were often skilled in trades and housekeeping, some even having knowledge of English. A Charleston newspaper provides an example:

> 230 choice Negroes . . . just arrived from Gambia . . . in perfect health, and have been inoculated for the smallpox on the coast. Among them are 20 young men and women with their children in families late servants of a person leaving Gambia R. Most of them can talk English and have been used to attend in a house and go in a craft, who will be kept separate in the yard.[18]

Of course most Africans possessed no rudimentary English and had no experience with white society. Their value was a long familiarity with planting and cultivation of rice and indigo, the quality of which was said to have surpassed that grown in Carolina. This meant that an extensive "breaking in" period and close agricultural supervision of "new" Africans was minimal. Thus while Upper Guinea Africans may have been preferred because they were tall and considered more manageable, evidence also suggests a more sound explanation: knowledge of agriculture made these Africans particularly sought after in coastal Carolina.

175 Hence, the middle period of the slave trade to Carolina which corresponds to the last half of the eighteenth century, is significant for obtaining additional impressions of African provenance in the coastal and Sea Island region, since this time span corresponded with vigorous economic growth in those areas. Aside from records left by merchants and factors, advertisements in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which, beginning in 1732, is an almost unbroken newspaper file, provide information on the trade. Announcements such as the following from 1756 usually mentioned and frequently emphasized the origin of cargoes:

> To be Sold: on Wednesday . . . a cargo of fine Slaves just arrived in the ship St. Andrew . . . directly from the River Gambia [Wolof, Serer, Mandingo, etc.]; they are perfectly healthy, and have been so the whole passage.
> Negroes chiefly from the same country as those which are brought from the River Gambia . . . from the factory in Sierra Leone [Mende, Temne, Vai, etc.] on the Windward Coast of Guiney, where said cargo was picked out of a large parcel.[19]

In the early nineteenth century the South Carolina up-country engaged in large-scale production of short staple cotton, creating a renewed demand for slaves. This brought on the third and final phase of African trading, from 1804 to 1808. The Kongo-Angola area mainly supplied up-country plantations as well as plantations in other states that refused to import. Percentage-wise then, Bantu-speaking peoples apparently comprised the majority of Africans imported to South Carolina. Yet it has
175 generally gone unnoticed that Upper Guinea contributed heavily to the
567 slave populations of the Sea Islands and surrounding coast. Africans of Senegambia figured most prominently in the slave trade to South Carolina prior to and immediately after the War for Independence. Closely following in imports were those of the Windward Coast. Together these two regions' captured inhabitants comprised a large majority of Africans brought to South Carolina even if we make allowances for the fact that Angolan ships were sometimes larger and sometimes brought more Africans to America.[20]

Thus, the middle period of the slave trade represented expanded economic enterprise in the Sea Islands where indigo dominated, and in the hinterlands where rice was almost exclusively cultivated. Africans brought into these areas where chiefly ethnic groups of Upper Guinea and were victims of the "holy war" conducted by Moslem Mandinga, Susu, and Fula peoples.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

17 trade. Djolas' simple manners and customs, loose tribal organization, and decentralized government made them easy prey for the European-backed, domineering, highly politically structured Moslem Mandingas. Thousands of Djolas filled the holds of British slave ships. Fulani inhabitants of the Gambia were, like Mandingas, followers of the Koran and by the sixteenth century were vassals of the latter. They planted crops, tended Mandinga cattle, leased their territory, and occasionally joined Mandinga merchants in wars against ethnic groups to procure slaves. Mandinga-Fulani interdependency probably goes farther than common religious ties to explain why large numbers of Fulani were not sold into slavery as compared with Djolas and Wolofs. Another large ethnic group of the Senegambia was the Seraculeh. They were actually a northern branch of Mandingas who engaged in slaving in the Upper River Division of the Gambia Valley.[22]

● 175 Besides obeying the Koran's edict to make war on "non-believers," black Muslim traders followed a custom of general acquisitiveness stimulated by European labor demands. Moslem Africans were enslaved for petty as well as major crimes and offenses. Walter Rodney has maintained that prior to the Atlantic trade most crimes were punishable by fines and few groups practiced capital punishment. The slave trade heightened rivalries and intensified a pattern of class exploitation.[23] This insight is supported by Francis Moore, a contemporary observer who remained on the Gambia River from 1730 to 1735. Moore noted that some Mandinga merchants journeyed inland and might not return with slaves for twenty days. But in referring to the littoral trade he observed:

> Besides the slaves which merchants bring down, there are many bought along the river. These are either taken in war, as the former are, or else men condemned for crimes, or else stolen, which is very frequent. . . . Since this slave trade has been us'd all punishments are changed into slavery; there being an Advantage on such condemnations, they strain for crimes very hard . . . every trifling crime is punished in the same manner.[24]

Rulers and elites perpetrated the trade against the general population, often whether Islam was professed or not. Occasionally mistakes were made and a noble would be enslaved, as in the case of Job ben Solomon. He was a wealthy Fula of the Gambia region who crossed the river with a coffle of slaves that he intended to sell for his father. Ben Solomon was caught by Mandinga merchants and sold to a Captain Pike of the ship *Arabella*, the same person with whom ben Solomon had bartered for his

•175 slaves, although the two could not agree on a price. Job ben Solomon attracted attention in America because of his noble birth and knowledge of Arabic. He was sent to England and later returned to his native Gambia. Europeans made every effort to rectify such situations before the Middle Passage, if a local nobleman inadvertently fell into their hands. Fear of retaliation on the part of the black elite and a desire to protect trading interests dictated this policy.[25] Thus while Djolas, Wolofs, and smaller non-Moslem groups figured most heavily in the Senegambia slave trade during the eighteenth century, all of the major tribes of the region were represented in the slave marts.

In the Sierra Leone littoral, the Temne and Bullom were the largest and most powerful ethnic groups by the sixteenth century. Other peoples included the Baga and the Lokko. Moslems did not wield political or military dominance in this area of the coast in the sixteenth century. However, Portuguese arrival encouraged Moslem Susu and Fula to move closer to the sea. Most of this penetration was peaceful but at times conflicts flared and captives were sold to slaving captains. By the mid eighteenth century, the Susu had carved out a seaway at the expense of the Baga and rivaled Mandinga activity in the Upper Guinea trade.[26]

In the seventeenth century a new wave of Fulani and Mandinga Muslims began settling in the mountainous regions of Sierra Leone, intermingling with non-Moslem Susu and Fula. Initial peaceful contact gave way to violence and the invaders launched the Jihad of the Futa Djalon in 1726, pushing converted and non-converted Susu and their ethnic kinspeople, the Djalonkes, south and west. Hence on the coast, Susu presence was enhanced and speeded up by the coming of refugees from the Jihad, and Islam made inroads among the littoral ruling groups. The Futa Djalon refugees encroached upon the indigenous peoples and sold these "war" captives in the slave trade. The Mandinga contingent, interested primarily in slaves but dispersing their knowledge of Islam as well, backed Fula Moslems who were thrusting singly and in groups from the interior. The victims of Moslem Fula, Mandinga, and Susu traders were primarily the Limba, Lokko, and Gizzi; secondarily, the Kono and Kuranko. But Moslem forces also came to dominate the coastal Baga, Temne, and Bullom. Ultimately an Islamic base was established among the upper class and the Jihad of the sword was rarely necessary against them. Hence harrassment of the common people was practiced on both sides. Bullom and Temne often worked with Susu and Fula traders in supply-

175 ing their own people, and placing Moslems in positions of authority and influence. Ruling groups became ideologically if not ethnically homogenous.[27]

The result of the Jihad was a "prodigious" trade in slaves in the last half of the seventeenth century. Despite interruptions of the trade to North America caused first by European wars and later by the War for Independence, British and Yankee captains supplied Carolina planters with a large number of "war captives" from factories on the Sierra Leone littoral. While their numbers did not compare with those taken from the Gold Coast by the British, the latter were primarily destined for the West Indies. The Jihad largely created the "startling activity" of slaving on the Upper Guinea coast.[28] It also coincided with coastal Carolina's agricultural expansion and renewed labor demands peopling the Sea Island region with Africans from a common cultural circle.

Another large ethnic group falling within the present geographical boundaries of Sierra Leone and also heavily engaged in the slave trade was the Mende people. Mende were of Mandinga stock but not followers of Islam during the era of the Atlantic trade. They were a warlike people, pushing into occupied territories, killing local rulers, and enslaving villagers. In the eighteenth century Mende occupied a large section of the Sherbro hinterland. Although they remained inland throughout most of the slave-trading period, Mende traders frequented the coast. The Mende preyed upon some of the same groups victimized by Moslem traders. But they also spread havoc and influence into the hinterlands of the Malaguetta Coast, a present-day Liberia. There they sought slaves for European traders and for their own society which was dominated by this type of labor.[29]

Pre-European history of ethnic populations of the Malaguetta or Windward Coast has been largely overshadowed by the long, unsettling presence of black American colonizers since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Yet during the time of South Carolina's coastal expansion slave trading in this region was brisk. Linguistically speaking, people of the region, now called Liberia, can be divided into three groups. Among the lower coast were the Kru group or Kwa-speaking people consisting of the Kru, Bassa, De, and Grebo. Kru were seldom enslaved because they were reportedly so adverse to bondage that they committed suicide if escape was impossible. Actually Kru men were excellent sailors and both African and European traders depended on them to transport

175 cargoes to waiting vessels on the lower coast. The second grouping was farther north and comprised the Mandingas or Mande-speaking people who were the Mandinga, Gbande, Mende, Vai, Kono, Buzi, Loma, Kpelle, Gio, and Mano. Within this group the Vai, Mende, and Mandingas dominated trade and most often infringed upon the liberty of their neighbors. The third group is perhaps most significant because so many of them made the Middle Passage. This group, the Gola, included Gizzis and Golas, and was of the Niger-Congo linguistic family encompassing Temne, Bullom, Fulani, and Wolof—widely separated peoples geographically. In the Malaguetta Coast region Gola and Gizzi were linguistically isolated on the northeast and northwest by Mande-speaking people.[30]

A process similar to what transpired in present-day Sierra Leone occurred in the Malaguetta Coast region of Upper Guinea. Warfare and movements of the Mende, Mandingas, and Fulani stimulated by the slave trade, created pressure situations for interior forest groups. Just as the Temne and Bullom were displaced by more aggressive groups, so was intensive Mandinga activity on the Malaguetta Coast evident by the seventeenth century. A commercial confederacy existed in which Western Sudanic goods were exchanged for slaves. The slaves were then sent to the coast through Vai and De middlemen. This created another series of wars in which Golas and Gizzis, inhabiting the interior northeast, were heavily involved. Golas and Gizzis struck back against Mandingas and Mende, but generally were no match for the two latter groups. Golas and Gizzis were in a state of almost continual warfare from the seventeenth century on. As slaving activity increased in the next century, Golas began stretching out to areas near Cape Mount and placing themselves under Vai and De protection. Other members of the Gola ethnic group moved out of the northeast where they had been heavily preyed upon. In both instances what began as small villages grew to become dominant towns. Hence while Gola numbers were being diminished in the northeast because of the slave trade, in regions near the coast they were thriving numerically. This led to conflict with Vai and De, the nominal rulers, and hence to more wars. The real source of conflict was control of trade. In the eighteenth century access to gunpowder, small arms, and cannon provided a new and more deadly kind of warfare, as well as extreme concentrations of power and wealth. A process of internal alliances and war within Gola chiefdoms and elsewhere created predacious conditions from the old Gola-Gizzi homeland in the interior to the heterogeneous coastal Mandinga confederacy.[31]

Golas never succeeded in wresting a settlement on the littoral from the Vai and hence had no direct commerce with European ships. Yet by the time of the first black American colonists' arrival in Liberia, Golas were a dominant group culturally and economically in the immediate interior. Prior to that however, they were, along with the Gizzi, the eighteenth century's major victims of the Atlantic slave trade in the region known as Liberia. They also succumbed to the defensive act of attacking and enslaving their own ethnic people. Gizzis were apparently transported in such large numbers that a river in Bullom territory was thusly named, although the Gizzi lived nowhere in that vicinity which was part of the Sierra Leone littoral. In 1778 it was reported that victims secured at Idolos, the factory near the Gizzi or Kizzi River, were in poor physical condition from having traveled great distances in slave coffles.[32]

The late Walter Rodney maintained that the scope of the Atlantic slave trade as conducted on the Upper Guinea Coast during the second half of the eighteenth century has not been fully appreciated and that the general level of trading from 1750 onward was high. Developments in South Carolina support his contention. During this period Africans arrived who transferred a medium of culture, communalism, and spirituality that assimilated with the existing African traditions, both of which necessarily adapted to Euro-American ambiance. Ultimately Africa's loss was America's gain. Still the history of the Atlantic slave trade remains a bitter memory, and the tragedy of it is poignantly revealed in the words of Professor Rodney:

> The impression that African society was being overwhelmed by its involvement with the European economy was most strongly conveyed at points when Africans conceded that their slaving activities were the consequences of the fact that nothing but slaves would purchase European goods. Yet European consumer goods contributed nothing to the development of African production. Only the rulers benefited narrowly, by receiving the best cloth, drinking the most alcohol, and preserving the widest collection of durable items for prestige purposes. It is this factor of realized self-interest which goes some way towards explaining the otherwise incomprehensible actions of Africans toward Africans.[33]

In summary, I argue that in the Carolina Lowcountry there was an early cultural dominance of BaKongo peoples of Kongo-Angolan origin, followed by Upper Guinea Africans of the Senegambia and Windward

175 Coasts. Upper Guinea peoples coming to Carolina found a creolized black culture already adjusting and acculturating. But more significantly, the large numbers of African-born slaves, entrenched into a system of rice production, also reinforced the Old World heritage. The complex formation of African-American Gullah culture involved, in some ways, the concept of "hearth areas," that is, those who arrive earlier may have as strong an impact as latecomers of more numerical strength. This may explain the continued use of Tshi (Gold Coast) names from the colonial era through the Civil War. Still, it was the BaKongo influence that served as incubator for many Gullah cultural patterns, and superceded Akan-Ashanti impact. Yet BaKongo cultural antecedents did not smother the Upper Guinea contribution to African-American culture. Indeed, it appears that each major group left its presence, and the longevity of these influences depended on adaptability. Thus, the "Doctrine of First Effective Settlement"[34] is significantly altered in the case of the Gullahs.

171 guiding potential Christian converts through the "seekin'" experience
791 just as Poro and Sande leaders conducted the neophytes through the "bush" experience.[25]

A second group of leaders worked on the periphery [illegible] Christianity. These "doctors" or "conjurers" were highly regarded by Africans and by African-Americans tied to their past while also creating a present. Some resembled the African specialists, in Kikongo the *nganga*, practitioners of *minkisi*. Yet others practiced *kindoki*, and brought evil. For if *Nzambi* and the ancestors set the limits of human possibility, and gave humans countermeasures against catastrophic forces, this influence was not always successful. The sorcerer *ndoki* brought chaos, disorder, sterilization of
(754) nature, and even death. Hence we fine among the Gullahs the belief in conjuration and in witches of human form who brought evil via mystical
(759) actions, and in root "doctors" and healers who worked for the forces of good.

567 As Christianity crusaded through the slave quarters during the last generation bondage, another type of major leadership is identified as hav-
771 ing a commanding influence upon the Gullahs. These plantation meeting
• 175 house elders, chosen by whites, were the last group to develop. As spiritual parents, root doctors, and conjurers were a bridge between old and new traditions, with accentuation of the former, the "praise house watchmen" were the embodiment of creative forces that congealed past and present into something exceptional. But the new leadership, unlike the old, was probably more definitely in alignment with the new religion. Still black elders were pillars of strength in the slave quarters, and often above reproach among the members of the socioreligious communities.[26]

178 Association with African traditions obviously weakened, first in wake of new circumstances and later due to the power and appeal of the new
771 religion. Yet while many elements of Africanity disappeared, other beliefs and customs took on new forms. Some features basic to traditional experience and thought outlived the capture, homeland enslavement, Middle Passage, and Protestant influence. African religious orientation was fundamental to early ethnic groups brought to the Sea Islands and
178 coastal Lowcountry. Additionally, in the process of community-building, a cosmology significant in traditional African societies formed another
771 basis of the Gullah world view and spirituality. A sacred concept of
829 reality and of the universe not only explained natural and supernatural phenomena for Africans, but fashioned notions about human relation-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 3

Missionaries and Masters

000

> The ignorance therefore of these poor slaves in the principles of Christianity in a Christian country and under a Christian government is not so much their fault as their unhappiness in falling into the hands of such ill masters who not only neglect to instruct them but scoff at those that attempt it, and give them likewise strange ideas of Christianity from the scandalous lives they lead.*

> We apprehend the Master, acting according to the law of your Province, in gelding his slave hath not committed any crime, to give any offence to any member to break communion with him in the Church.**

Anglicans

•175 In 1701, about thirty years after the founding of Carolina, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was established in order to bring the Anglican church to the British colonies. The SPG was also chartered to Christianize so-called heathen blacks and Indians. In South Carolina the two missions were at variance throughout the Society's presence there.[1]

South Carolinians first came into contact with Indians through trade and war. The practice was to enslave Indian prisoners of war, and early eighteenth-century letters of Society missionaries mention Indian slaves often enough to indicate their sizable presence among the bondspeople. The Society hoped to address the spiritual needs of both slave and free

*South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8.

[113] **Baptist Church in Devon, England to Baptist Church at Charles Town 1710, from William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 501.

175 Indians, and of black slaves. Ministers met resistance from every quarter, especially in regard to blacks. Indians were considered more "civilized" by both Society missionaries and planters. Also, African slavery increased while Indian slavery waned, with the latter group becoming less of a threat to planters and less of an insurmountable challenge to Society missionaries. Some white adventurers on the frontier were deeply involved in trading with Indians and welcomed the presence of a missionary for their own personal reasons. From St. Helena, Thomas Nairne, Anglican missionary and Indian trader, wrote to the Society in 1705 that their "good faith and charitable intention" toward the Indians was being "perverted" under the notion that converting Negroes was "a work good and necessary." "You know as well as I," wrote Nairne, "that all Carolina laughs at that untruth."[2]

Early efforts to Christianize blacks were attempted only in more settled areas of Charleston and surrounding frontier plantations. Nevertheless, hostility to the enterprise continued as the colony developed and the slave population increased. Society missionaries listed numerous "rubs and impediments," mostly under the rubric of desire for profit on the part of planters, the master's own impiety, or fear of insurrection. Planters of all denominations struggled financially in the early eighteenth century and considered slave conversion inimical and inconsistent with their pecuniary interests. They were unwilling to give slaves time for instruction on workdays, and even Sunday teaching was not generally permitted. Sunday was the day slaves worked for themselves. "There are many Planters who to free themselves from the trouble of feeding and clothing their slaves allow them one day in the week to clear ground and plant for themselves as much as will clothe and subsist them and their families," complained a Society clergyman in 1712 to the British Commissary. But, added the clergy, Sunday was already their ministers' busiest day for it was set aside to administer to whites. "I shall not mention any conversion of heathen servants," wrote William Taylor from "St Martin in the field," owing to the "backwardness of masters." From Christ Church, a frontier area just south of Charleston, Gilbert Jones insisted in 1716 that his work was hindered by the "pursuit of wealth." He wrote that "the least apprehension of entrenching upon their darling interest overbalances the most urgent argument we can use to persuade them to their duty. . . ."[3]

What was needed, according to the frustrated South Carolina clergy,

175

was the force of local government which could pass binding legislation on the colonists, and itinerant catechists sent by the Society who could devote full time to missionary work. The choice of whether or not slaves were exposed to Christianity had to be taken out of the hands of masters:

> They know that if they would encourage their [slaves] conversion they must allow them some reasonable time for their instruction; and this would consequently be a hindrance to their work and an abatement of the Master's. And this is not openly owned and avowed to be the cause of that . . . unwillingness they express on this occasion, yet I may venture to say 'tis so at the bottom. Nor can some of them forbear to speak out their minds, though they endeavor to justify and excuse themselves by pretending that the slaves (the Negroes especially) are a wicked stubborn race of men and can never be converted, tho to gull and deceive their Masters they may put on the air and appearance of religion.[4]

Society representatives were in an unenviable position. Depending upon white colonists for salary and substance, ministers rarely took planters seriously to task for hostility to slave instruction. Letters received by the Home Office sometimes reveal a life of sacrifice and futile struggle on behalf of the enslaved. But correspondence also presents the uneven character of clergy and planters alike. Not all Society clergymen used their office prudently or even spiritually. Sometimes, those who did found the vestry rallied against them. The planters were known as a loud, boisterous, impious group. One distraught clergyman wrote from Goosecreek that conversion of slaves would be greatly facilitated if masters themselves could "be persuaded to lead truly Christian lives." He continued:

> It is a melancholy reflection to consider how very much the wicked lives and scandalous behaviour of many professing Christianity have hitherto retarded in these parts of the world, for not a few of these . . . have sometimes been guilty . . . of such gross enormities as even the more modest heathens . . . have been ashamed of. . . .[5]

Ministers related that among the planters, "Religion was the thing they troubled themselves with the least." From St. George's Parish Francis Varnod wrote that "Sunday was only distinguished from other days because it was a day of rest and pleasure." Some ministers admonished too consistently and as a result suffered ridicule, harassment, and removal. At St. Phillips Church in Charleston the Reverend Marston was turned out "without salary due him," though many considered him a "good, moral, hospitable" man who noted "vice and virtue with no respect of

● 175 person." For some time there was no one in the province to preach or administer sacraments until one more to the liking of certain communicants was substituted. The new rector was reportedly of "evil fame" and on one occasion, "in his cups baptised a bear."[6]

Some Carolina clergymen had harsh words for the planters who made their lives and work difficult. The most dedicated minister, Francis Le Jau of Goose Creek, wrote that "revenge, self-interest, engrossing of trade, peaces of profit" in anything whatsoever were the only concern of planters. Le Jau was convinced that the "topping men" of the colony "were satisfied with a church which they could largely control and which made no pietistical demand on their way of life." And in a voice of unity the clergy wrote to the Society in London that the worse "generation of infidels" they had to deal with were not "those poor heathen slaves," but their masters. Speaking with "equal grief and truth" the clergy considered the planters' actions and attitudes to "have made themselves worse than dogs."[7]

175
797
The problem of Christian instruction was even more dire in the Sea Island Parish of St. Helena. Until 1733 when Georgia was settled, this was South Carolina's southernmost frontier, embracing the township of Beaufort and surrounding islands. While more settled parishes were populated with whites and Africans, St. Helena was primarily still part of the Indian lands. The major occupation of the handful of settlers was Indian trade. Yemassee Indians inhabiting the region tried to maintain friendly relations with white settlers. But avaricious land grabbing and broken trade agreements caused conflicts that endangered the parish's existence. In 1715 the Yemassee waged all-out war, and the entire province faced extinction. Many settlers took refuge in Charleston. St. Helena was completely uprooted while an army of 600 whites and 400 slaves was obliged to engage the Indians throughout the southern regions of Carolina. Not until 1716 did white families return to St. Helena and rebuild their dwellings. But frequent alarms occasioned by Spaniards as well as Indians forced homeseekers to flee at a moment's notice to more densely occupied and better protected parishes.[8]

Although missionaries were sent among Indians around St. Helena as early as 1704, twenty more years passed before a church building for whites was erected. Prior to 1725 the nearest parish church was forty miles away from St. Helena by water travel. Six pews accommodated the Anglican communicants which consisted of around thirty-nine fami-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

lies in 1728. The first rector was Lewis Jones who served in that capacity 175 until 1745. Jones painted a bleak picture of life on the frontier. "The 797 inhabitants are mostly poor planters of corn, pease, rice and a good many or them living at a great distance from each other," he wrote in 1728. There were at that time sixty-two families in the parish, thirty-nine of whom were Anglican, twenty-one Presbyterian, one Independent, and one Anabaptist. At that time only 170 slaves lived in the entire parish, [567] and hence they were a minority, an atypical situation for early Carolina.[9]

The parish had no school although a few families had private teachers. 175 As for the Negro slaves, Jones admitted in 1728 that "no care" was taken 567 in Christianizing them. The reason, he cited, was due to their frequent [797] removal to other areas, since Spaniards and Indians plagued the frontier, carrying away slaves. As a result, the number of St. Helena slaves de- [161] creased rather than increased from 224 in 1727 to 170 in 1728, while the entire colony's black population was over 20,000 in 1727.[10] Several possibilities may explain the disappearance of slaves. Spaniards provided a safety valve and chance for freedom. Indians may have done the same or may have simply attempted to decimate the white people's black labor force. Proximity to freedom and the paucity of whites must have intensified slaves' expectation of obtaining liberty. If later developments are any indication, slaves took advantage of these opportunities and the removal of slaves from the area represented white efforts to prevent this. The pattern continued until the Spanish and Indians were pushed back by the settlement of Georgia.

But the Sea Island region received early missionary attention for the 175 slaves from another Anglican source. Thomas Bray (1658–1729/30) was 567 the chief organizer of the three Anglican missionary efforts—the Society 797 for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), established in 1699, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), formed in 1701, and the Associates for Dr. Bray, established in 1723/24 and reorganized in 1729–30. Bray's first concern was Christianizing blacks and Indians. But he also shared, with Georgia founder James Oglethorpe, an interest in improving the lot of prisoners in England. With encouragement and financial support from high places, Bray and a group of sympathizers attempted to put a missionary plan into operation, hence the founding of Bray's Associates. Because Thomas Bray and a number 175 of Associates became involved in plans to found Georgia, it was determined that the southern missionary movement should begin near Savan-

● 175 nah (since the Trustees did not initially intend to have slaves in Georgia). One Associate and Georgia Trustee wrote to John Wesley prior to the latter's departure for Georgia as a missionary to whites:

> One end for which we were associated was the conversion of Negro slaves. As yet nothing has been attempted in this way; but a door is opened, not far from home [i.e. Georgia]. The Purryburgers have purchased slaves; they act under our influence; and Mr. Oglethorpe will think it advisable to begin there.[11]

Thomas Bray did not live to see Oglethorpe settle Georgia or to witness the missionary attempt among South Carolina slaves. But he and his Associates were instrumental in bringing about one endeavor to Christianize slaves in South Carolina.[12]

A colony of Swiss Protestant refugees, led by Jean Pierre Purry, settled on the southern frontier on the north bank of the Savannah River in 1731. This was about 20 miles from where Savannah, Georgia, would be located in 1733. Two Moravian missionaries, commissioned by the Associates to instruct slaves in Purrysburg, arrived there in 1739. The missionary venture failed. Few blacks were in the area, and one missionary became ill and died within six months. The other sailed for Philadelphia the following year. But an even more significant note on the ill-fated nature of the plan was the fact that these missionaries apparently could not even speak English. Yet this early activity and interest in slave conversion in the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Island region set the stage for future developments. The Georgia Trustees' alteration of their brief policy of slavery exclusion in the colony, the proximity of the two colonies, and the Trustees' early concern for religious instruction made the Sea Island region fruitful territory for the evangelism of George Whitefield during the Great Awakening. These early associations also perhaps laid the foundation for later acceptance of black independent churches at a time when such institutions were forbidden elsewhere. Georgia's evangelistic fervor and liberalism spilled over into the South Carolina slave population in the Sea Island region.[13]

175
797
567
Lewis Jones remained at St. Helena until his death in 1745 and his main concern as rector was with white communicants. In 1736 he complained to the Society that despite his endeavors he had only been allowed to baptize one black and one mulatto slave. Bringing Christianity to slaves in St. Helena was discouraging work. Writing to the Secretary in England he stated that "the pious zeal of the venerable Society, and

175 567 797 of its worthy Diocesan for promoting Christian knowledge among the Negroes meets with but a cold reception." This attitude was further strengthened by the 1739 Stono Rebellion. From St. Helena Lewis Jones lamented the fact that twenty-three "much indulged" slaves from his parish had joined the rebellion.[14]

But St. Helena witnessed some spiritual awakening. Whitefield preached there in 1739 and convinced a few whites to instruct slaves in Christianity. Whitefield however was not popular with the Anglican hierarchy. Unbeknownst to Lewis Jones, Whitefield had been censored by Commissary Alexander Garden in Charleston, and the latter was outraged upon learning that the outspoken evangelist was preaching in the Anglican Church at St. Helena. Further problems were created for Jones by one of Whitefield's St. Helena disciples, a planter named Hugh Bryan. Bryan, considered a mystic and an eccentric, preached to his slaves and reportedly openly predicted they would rebel and obtain their freedom.[15]

Like sister parishes, St. Helena suffered from problems of white communicants with only marginal interest in spiritual matters. Jones complained that duly elected vestrymen refused to serve even after accepting appointments. Church attendance was also poor. Jones suggested Sunday worship be held only once in five weeks. But even these infrequent services were poorly attended with the total numbers of communicants usually not exceeding twenty. Still, the long tenure of Lewis Jones brought an added stability and consistency for the Church of England on the frontier and it remained the dominant denomination throughout the colonial era. After Jones' death, ministers came and went in rapid succession. As the parish grew in economic enterprise through cultivation of indigo, a demand for slaves gave St. Helena a new significance. Yet, except for short-term effects of the Great Awakening, Anglicans in the Sea Island region remained aloof toward spiritual enthusiasm for themselves and their burgeoning African-born black population.[16]

175 Pecuniary interest and spiritual indifference were not the only factors that generated hostility and a "cold reception" from planters. The element of sheer physical self-preservation cannot be discounted as a reason for planter resistance. They were spread out on the frontier, surrounded by a predominantly hostile population—namely West Africans and Indians—and were in the process of exploiting both through bondage and unfair trade practices. Whites had every reason to fear of slave insurrec-

175 tion and Indian attacks. They wanted and needed docile, obedient servants, not "Christians" with a sense of spiritual freedom and "leisure" for worship. They were convinced Christianity would make laborers unfit for slavery and induce feelings of equality with whites. Geographical dispersement of white settlers was an added anxiety. Plantations were "remote and distant from one another," so that if the majority of slaves were frequently assembled their numbers would be known to them. This would provide "an opportunity of knowing their own strength and superiority in point of number," and possibly tempt them "to recover their liberty, tho' it were the slaughter and destruction of the whole colony."[17]

Some missionaries were convinced that planters used fear of insurrection as an excuse to prevent slaves from being instructed. The Reverend Varnod wrote that masters pretend "that the slaves would use the Lord's Day to make insurrection." If this was the real reason for non-cooperation, he queried, why was it that ministers were also prohibited by civil authorities from going into the slave cabins and instructing them? Yet other missionaries insisted that the fear was real. The frontier parishes provided opportunities for flight and resistance because of minimal fortifications, a small white population, and the presence of free Indians on the one side and anti-British Spaniards on the other. Whites were cognizant of their vulnerability and impatient with an Anglican clergy who saw Christianizing black slaves as an issue of consequence. Rather, it was the planters' policy to have red and black slaves "put check upon each other lest by their vastly superior numbers," whites would be "crushed by one or the other."[18]

The method of Christian instruction employed by South Carolina Anglicans added to the planters' uneasiness. Anglicans believed literacy was essential for communicants and their work consisted of compelling slaves to memorize the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, a short catechism, and in explaining to slaves the life and death of Christ in brief discourse. But the major emphasis was on literacy, which most clergymen considered a prerequisite for baptism. Bibles and common prayer books were sent from England. Yet the amount of time needed to teach reading properly was not provided. Many whites were openly hostile to the idea of slave literacy. While Society representatives might persuade a "pious" planter to allow a "favorite" country-born slave the benefits of literacy, such an opportunity was unusual. Dissemination of knowledge among slaves served no useful purpose from the planters' point of view.[19]

In 1734, as a direct attack on SPG activity among the slaves, the planter-controlled South Carolina Assembly passed a law prohibiting slaves from leaving plantations on "Sundays, fast days, and holy days" without a ticket. Since few bondspeople were given passes to attend worship, and clergymen were not normally allowed in slave cabins, the law was a serious setback for the already languishing missionary movement. Peter Wood has discussed "mounting anxiety and patterns of control" on the part of whites in the 1730s, as the black, foreign-born slave population around Charleston expanded dramatically through importations. This apprehension was increased as planters also associated religious instruction with rebelliousness. An insurrection plot uncovered in Antigua in 1736 fed Carolina planters' fears and their belief in the ill effects of the Society's endeavors. The conspiracy was widespread and accounts stated that many of the leaders were literate, having been taught by Anglican clergy.[20] 175

But it was the Stono Rebellion of 1739 and two subsequent abortive uprisings that brought home the issue for white Carolinians. The Stono uprising began in St. Paul's Parish, twenty miles from Charleston. It gained momentum as the rebels headed farther south for Spanish St. Augustine, gathering recruits as they went. White Carolinians were especially enraged by the fact that notices posted by Spaniards offering freedom to runaways could be read by slaves who had received instruction from Society missionaries. The New Negro Act passed in 1740 curtailed the Society's freedom to teach slaves to read and write English. It was the biggest setback for the Society's program thus far.[21]

Still the Society persisted in more settled regions, though not with unified enthusiasm. While most legislation following the Stono Rebellion was repressive, it was also intended to reduce the incentive for revolt. In 1740 Alexander Garden, South Carolina Commissary for the Bishop of London, made a proposal. He suggested placing young, Carolina-born slave boys, ten or twelve years of age, under full Society tutelage for two years. Once trained, these youths would return to the plantations as religious school masters, adequately prepared to instruct slave children and adults in the neighborhood. Garden insisted that the most effective method was to have a teacher come from the slaves' own numbers. "As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children, or from young to old." Garden confidently asserted that in twenty years, "knowledge of 17

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

aged benevolence toward slaves and encouraged Quakers to instruct their slaves in Christianity. Yet most Quakers followed a policy of excluding blacks from meetings even though they may have provided religious instruction.[24] 17

Presbyterians and Baptists immigrated to South Carolina in the 1680s, settling in Charleston and nearby areas. Encouraged by the promotional campaign which the colony's proprietors initiated, two wealthy groups of English and Scottish Presbyterians settled in Carolina. The first Presbyterian church, the Circular Church, was organized in Charleston by 1690. Like early Baptists who settled in Carolina, Presbyterians were Calvinists who practiced the doctrine of election and restricted church membership. Hence, they did not actively engage in programs of slave conversion.[25] Yet despite their Calvinism, early Baptists had divergent view about doctrine which separated them from other independent denominations and which later led to adoption of evangelism that included their slave population. 175

The name "Baptists" or "Anabaptists," given to the adherents of this particular denomination, has deceptive connotations. It was not a self-chosen name but one attached to the denomination by enemies during the Reformation. Baptists asserted that infant "sprinkling" was not warranted in the scriptures, and was thus contrary to the principle of voluntary action in religion, hence inviting corruption. These Christians made baptism on a profession of faith a condition of church fellowship. This, along with their denial of the validity of infant baptism and adherence to total immersion, did more than anything else to place Baptists at variance with other denominations. Yet rejection of infant baptism did not occupy as prominent a position in Baptist belief as opponents gave it. Baptists' most uncompromising religious position was their belief in the absolute authority and sufficiency of scripture and a regenerate church membership (principles which all evangelical sects ultimately embraced). This meant applying scripture to details of doctrine, practice, and daily life. Those Baptists who owed their origin to English Puritanism, and who rejected the medieval evangelism in the Augustinian tradition, strongly believed in Calvinism, especially predestination. (They were called Particular Baptists.) Puritan-oriented Baptists, led by William Screven, moved from Maine in 1683 and settled in Charleston at the same time that another group of similar persuasion arrived from England. By 1699 the two groups had emerged and formed one church. Quarrels and infighting over leadership and doctrine caused a schism in the 1720s that led to the Old England group moving out of the building. Ultimately the Old England branch settled at Stono. It was the Screven-influenced groups that spread the tenets of the Baptist faith throughout the coastal regions. They broadened and tempered their Calvinism and, under the preaching of Whitefield, adopted for a short time a modified evangelism.[26]

Thus Baptist presence in Carolina predated that of official Anglican representation. Of all the dissenting sects, SPG ministers found Baptists the most troublesome. Society ministers found Church of England adherents attending Baptist meetings, choosing "rather to hear them . . . than none." This provided an added dilemma for Anglican ministers trying to establish the Church of England. They had to compete with believers whose practices were radically opposed to Anglicanism. Anabaptists presented their views in a heavy-handed manner according to Society ministers. Le Jau wrote that on one occasion an Anabaptist teacher espoused the doctrine of predestination in "so terrifying a manner that the next day after his preaching . . . a good man of my acquaintance hanged himself." It was a direct result of Anabaptist fatalistic preaching which threw the man into melancholy. And although the death "mortified" the sect, they continued their style of preaching, causing Le Jau to define Anabaptist character as consisting of "much obstinacy and little sense."[27]

Most early Baptists came to Carolina in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity. Some were well-to-do, but most were poor or "middling" people engaged in planting, trading, and the skilled crafts. In addition to fervor for their faith, Baptists were as eager as others to acquire obvious forms of individious distinction—land and slaves. In proportion to their numbers, which remained comparatively small as the colony grew, Baptists expanded their economic interests and spiritual influence throughout the Lowcountry. Every parish had its share of Dissenters and Baptists were the most aggressive. Usually Baptists spread out as families rather than as a sect. If conditions were favorable, established Baptists encouraged others to settle. In 1728 the most remote parish, St. Helena, had only one Anabaptist family out of a total of sixty-two. Christ Church Parish, closer in but still a frontier settlement, had twenty Baptist families out of fifty-three in all.[28] But the opening up of land taken away from Indians, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in France, and later the demand for indigo, led to increased Baptist presence and influence in the coastal and Sea Island regions.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

As slaveholders, Carolina Baptists contributed to developing attitudes about slavery and blacks. They were, for the most part, Calvinist (or Particular) Baptists. Early Baptists did not attempt to bring Christianity to slaves and would not allow other sect's missionaries among their bondspeople. Nevertheless, at least one aspect of slavery caused anxiety among early Baptist slaveholders as it did among the Anglican ministers who spoke out in protest. By law, South Carolina masters were *required* to castrate a slave who ran away four times, or the master faced forfeiture of ownership to the white informer. Perhaps because of the strong protest raised by Society minister Francis Le Jau, perhaps because of the dissension it caused within their own sect, Baptist planters questioned the validity of this particular law. Charleston Baptists wrote the Baptist Church in Devon, England, for an opinion. Was this form of punishment a sin and a travesty against religious conscience? The Devon congregation replied in the negative by way of a lengthy expository. Intentions of the law were corrective not malicious wrote the Devon minister. Also, the law was passed for the "common good" and preservation of order. ". . . are not those Negroes a sort of rude, unpolished people whose nature requireth a stricter hand over 'em?" queried the English minister. Furthermore, not to punish a slave severely would be "a means of encouraging him in rebellion for the future." The Devon Church also put the matter to the Baptist Association for a verdict. The several churches agreed with the Devon congregation:

> We apprehend, the Master Acting according to the Law of your Province, in gelding his slave, hath not committed any crime, to give any member to break communion with him in the church; because we see by Scripture, that 'tis lawful to buy them. (Gen. 17: 13, 23, 27). And if lawful to buy them 'tis lawful to keep them in order, and under government; and for self-preservation, punish them to prevent farther mischief that may ensue by their running away and [?] rebelling against their masters, Exodus 21: 20, 21.[29]

Like fellow Anglican settlers, Baptist planters viewed slaves as a labor force, not generally as potential Christian converts. What troubled Baptists about the castration law, as pointed out, was concern for their own souls. Also, Calvinist-oriented Baptists followed the tradition of civil law being in agreement with God's law. Hence they sought justification, not to say rationalization, for the sake of their sense of piety and not out of concern for black humanity. Additionally, the law applied to black slaves, not apparently to Indians or white, indentured servants. Clearly, a dou-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders ,NN23
South Carolina

● 175

ble standard operated even in terms of blacks and Indians, both of whom were enslaved, but not considered by some on the same level in the chain of being. Once again scripture was used to rationalize specialized cruelty and racism. The law of Moses distinguished between "Jewish and heathenish servant(s)," with the former receiving "greater mercy" according to the Devon congregation. Was not the case "somewhat the same" since the "nature" of Negroes required more severity? It was a new low for Carolina slavery, already filled with atrocities. For the gelding law had no Southern colonial precedent. Barbados, from where the colony borrowed its code, had no such law, although New Jersey passed a gelding law in 1706.[30]

Early Baptists' questioning of the gelding law had little or nothing to do with concern for slaves, but was primarily to purge and "save" their own souls. As William McLoughlin and Winthrop Jordan point out, letters such as those sent to the English Baptists by Carolina Baptists, which compile an entire collection, indicate some opposition to cruelties imposed upon slaves, but are even more telling for other reasons. The correspondence demonstrates how religious values were malleated to conform with civil institutions in South Carolina, and illustrate a belief that civil authority and God's law must be obeyed equally. Furthermore, these letters centering on problems of conscience and conduct reveal the use of biblical sanction of slavery and the slave code to maintain the social order.[31] These uses of religion by a later generation of South Carolina Baptists is explored in Chapter Seven.

A favorite slave might be allowed into the denomination fold. But for the most part, early Baptist interests as slaveholders and their doctrinal beliefs precluded accepting masses of slaves into the sect of a "chosen few." Hence Baptists were not troubled about the fate of black souls. Nevertheless, as the black population increased in Charleston, some were allowed the "privilege" of attending Baptist worship. Slaves whose Baptist masters embraced the evangelism of Whitefield were probably exposed to Christian instruction. Yet Whitefield's impact on Baptists was not totally positive from a spiritual perspective. General Baptists, espousing essentially Arminian views, were opposed to Whitefield. But many Particular Baptists of Calvinist-Puritan orientation accepted Whitefield. The latter group spread to the Lowcountry and were responsible for the missionary activity of their sect during the Great Awakening.[32]

CHAPTER 4

Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening

000

> Just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text and looking round . . . as I thought directly upon me, and pointing his finger, he uttered . . . "Prepare to meet thy God O'Israel." . . . I was struck to the ground and lay both speechless and senseless. . . . When the people were dismissed, Mr. Whitefield came in to the vestry, and being told of my condition he came immediately, and he said, "Jesus Christ has got thee at last."*

> As among us religious instruction usually descends from parents to children, so among them it must at first ascend from children to parents, or from young to old.—They are as 'twere a Nation within a Nation. In all country settlements, they live in contiguous houses, often 2, 3, or 4 families in one house, slightly partitioned into so many apartments, so they labor together, and converse almost wholly among themselves, . . .**

The Coming of George Whitefield

175●

The late 1730s were trying times for South Carolina as one calamity after another befell the province. In 1737, widespread fear and alarm occurred over a pending Spanish attack which never came. In 1738 and 1739 smallpox and yellow fever ravaged the colony. In 1739 the Lowcountry was shaken by a slave uprising that left more than sixty people dead. It was no wonder that many residents of pleasure-loving Charleston were psychologically prepared for the coming of George Whitefield

---

*William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785), 13. 113

**Alexander Garden to London Office, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury.

175 in 1740. Indeed, the inhabitants seemed to anticipate that on the heels of disaster would come one preaching penitence and redemption.[1]

Before his first journey to America in 1738, George Whitefield was a rising, controversial Anglican cleric, known for his enthusiasm and capacity to draw masses of people from many walks of life, but especially the lower ranks of society. In the colonies, he established headquarters in Savannah, Georgia, where at twenty-three he served as Anglican missionary and founded Bethesda, an orphanage for white children. At twenty-five in 1740, Whitefield's reputation in the colonies was well known and he moved thousands, particularly in the middle colonies, through the spiritual force of his sermons. Whitefield was of humble birth, and a friend as well as former Oxford mate of the more erudite Wesleys, John and Charles, although in 1741 the brothers broke with Whitefield for doctrinal and personal reasons. (This breach lasted for a number of years.) Still, both the Wesleys and Whitefield were part of the "despised" Methodist group which John Wesley later stabilized, organized, and shaped into a massive denomination. Yet Whitefield and the Great Awakening laid the groundwork for Wesleyan Methodism in America some thirty years before the first itinerant was sent. Young Whitefield's appeal, his introduction of open-air and extempore evangelical preaching, captured the spiritual pulse of England and America.[2]

Whitefield's first visit to Charleston was in late August, 1738:

> Arrived last night here, and preached twice to-day, I hope with some good effect. The Bishop of London's Commissary, the Rev. Mr. Garden, a good soldier of Christ, received me in a most Christian manner. . . . How does God raise me up friends whereever I go.[3]

This initial positive impression of Charleston and Commissary Garden was short-lived. Upon his return to England, Whitefield was under increasing attack and criticism. He and Wesley were shut out of many Anglican pulpits because of their doctrinal views and method of preaching. Whitefield also introduced into religious revival open-air worship, because, in the words of Charles Wesley, "The Churches will not contain the multitudes that throng to hear him."[4]

Yet popularity with the people caused problems with the clergy in England and in the colonies. Although a minister of the Church of England, Whitefield openly attacked Anglican preachers and warmly fellowshipped with dissenting congregations. Colonialists, already involved in a religious awakening, welcomed Whitefield. In 1739, on his second visit, 175 his evangelical tour attracted thousands. Whitefield's controversy with the Anglican clergy centered on his belief in regeneration and the necessity of rebirth for salvation. Additionally, the young evangelist preached that the doctrine of "works" should be replaced with "justification by faith," and he took this controversy into his public ministry. Thus Whitefield aligned himself with many Dissenters and soon gained general opposition from almost all of the Anglican clergy.[5]

Following his tour of the middle colonies, Whitefield journeyed South overland, preaching along the way and freely espousing his theological views among all who listened. Upon reaching Charleston he was denied use of the Anglican Church, St. Phillips, because "the curate had not a commission to lend the pulpit," without the consent of the Commissary, who was out of town. This did not silence Whitefield. He preached at a meetinghouse to a large but lukewarm audience. Whitefield noted the affectation of dress and gaiety which he thought ill-becoming an audience receiving the Word, and he made this the subject of his sermon. Next day, many more came to hear the evangelist and he felt rewarded for the previous day's efforts:

> . . . Many were melted to tears. One of the town, most remarkably gay, was observed to weep. Instead of the people going out (as they did yesterday) in a light, unthinking manner, a visible concern was in most of their faces.[6]

Whitefield was moved by this sentiment and agreed to stay another day, preaching in the largest meetinghouse in town. He left Charleston, "full of joy at the prospect of a good work having begun in that place."[7]

This optimistic attitude, however, was not completely reflected in Whitefield's journal, as he penned his impressions of the American colonies. Pennsylvania he believed was the "garden of America." He found the people sociable, sober, and hardworking. More significantly for Whitefield, "they have the Lord for their God." He had not yet seen New England. The Southern colonies had little esteem for religion according to the evangelist. Maryland was worse than Virginia, not because of Catholicism but because of the Church of England. Yet neither colony was exemplary because of slavery, indentured servitude, an Anglican clergy spoiled by "too much tobacco," and because people lived great distances from each other and used this excuse to forego public worship. North Carolina scarcely had even "the form of religion" with

• 175 no church house yet completed. His most biting criticism was for South Carolina where there were abundant ministers of many persuasions and where Commissary Garden was "strict in the outward discipline of the Church." Yet despite the prevalence of ministers, meetinghouses and outward spiritual form, Whitefield surmised of South Carolina, "I hear of no stirring among the dry bones."[8]

An open controversy between Whitefield and Commissary Garden erupted in full force when the former returned to Charleston for his mail from England, in the spring of 1740. Whitefield called upon Garden and was surprised with a "cool reception." His attacks on the Anglican clergy, his unorthodox preaching, and his decision to commune with dissenting churches had angered the Commissary. Garden accused the evangelist of "enthusiasm" and "pride" for speaking against the clergy. Wherein, asked the Commissary, was the clergy to blame? Whitefield replied, "they do not preach justification by faith alone." After discussing the matter, the evangelist, known for his self-righteousness in spiritual concerns, determined that Garden "was as ignorant as the rest." Garden raged at the young cleric, accusing him of breaking his "Cannons and Ordination vow." Whitefield reminded Garden that he was an ordained minister with letters from the Bishop of London. The conversation grew more heated before it concluded. Garden warned Whitefield that if he preached at any public church again in Carolina, he would suspend him. Whitefield wrote in his journal:

> I replied, I should regard that as much as I would a Pope's bull. "But, Sir," I said, "why should you be offended at my speaking against the generality of the clergy; for I always spoke well of you?" "I might as well be offended . . . at you saying 'the generality of the people are notorious sinners' . . . because I am one of the people." I further added, "you did not behave thus, when I was with you last." "No," he said, "but you did not speak against the clergy then." Then I said to him, "If you will make an application to yourself . . . let me ask . . . . Have you delivered your soul by exclaiming against the assemblies and balls here?"
>
> "What," said he, "must you come to catecize me? No. I have not . . . there is no harm in them." "Then," I replied, "I shall think it my duty to exclaim against you." "Then, Sir," he said in a very great rage, "Get you out of my house."[9]

The enmity continued, with Whitefield preaching to Charleston and experiencing unprecedented popularity as he bewailed the hand of God in the problems that befell the province. Garden sometimes attacked

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Whitefield from the pulpit of St. Philips when the young minister came for worship, and he refused to give Whitefield the Sacraments. Nevertheless, Dissenters and probably more than a few Anglicans came under the spell of Whitefield's doctrines of regeneration and rebirth. The enmity was taken up in the newspapers and through letter writing campaigns.[10] Thus the two most significant men to address the issue of the religious instruction of slaves were bitter antagonists. And within the conflict the subject of slavery as well as doctrinal differences had a place.

Alexander Garden began the Charleston Negro School in 1743 with the approbation of the Society and a few slaveholders. He was familiar with the Carolina scene, having arrived there in 1719. Through his efforts the school lasted for over twenty years, although its success was very limited. Two young boys were purchased, taught to read and write, and then instructed in elementary Christianity. Reaction toward the school was positive in some quarters. As soon as Garden's two protégés, Harry and Andrew, were trained, students were admitted. Spelling books, Testaments, and common prayer books were contributed by the Society, the Bray Associates, and a few concerned residents. Thirty students were enrolled at first, and by 1747 the school had forty "scholars" who were "graduated" with a basic, elementary knowledge of Christianity and literacy. The school appeared to be thriving and in 1748, Garden wrote that ". . . the Society's negro school at Charles Town continued to go on with all desirable success and last year discharged about 17 scholars discharged as proposed."[11]

Thus while Garden was engaged in a bitter debate with George Whitefield, partly over slavery as we shall see, the Commissary was also using his efforts to bring Christianity and literacy to some slaves. The Charleston Negro School was extremely limited in outreach capacity, but important community leaders (such as the Pinckneys, Pringles, and Wraggs) believed in it. When the school was blown down by a tempest in 1752, it was built within a month and the supplies replaced. The year 1755 was a peak one for the school, with seventy children enrolled. But Garden resigned his position that year and his successor, Richard Clarke, was not as influential a rector. Slaves certainly seemed willing and eager to attend, probably for an opportunity at literacy rather than religious instruction. Hence while there was no lack of pupils, white support was a problem. Though they had to "pinch it off their own backs and out of their own bellies, Blacks sought education for their children."[12]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

1750

The occasion of Whitefield's overland journey from Philadelphia to Savannah brought him face to face with the institution of slavery. Slavery was ingrained in the fabric of American life and Whitefield viewed it firsthand, lodging on large and small plantations, observing the slaves in their arduous labor. He was struck by their treatment of their foreignness. Whitefield generally insisted that his hosts allow him access to their slaves, among whom he talked and prayed. As a result of this journey and subsequent observations, he composed his famous letter to the slave owners. Never one to mince words, Whitefield was clear and forthright in his attack. At the time he prepared his letter to the slaveholders, he also wrote an equally controversial piece attacking the late Archbishop Tillotson. Tillotson's memory was revered in England and America by Anglicans as well as Dissenters who adhered to a doctrine of works. Yet Whitefield took issue with the cleric's position, declaring that in terms of scriptural and Anglican doctrine of justification by faith, the late archbishop "was certainly as ignorant thereof as Mahamet himself." Thus both letters, published simultaneously, created a howl of protest.[16]

Just as Whitefield eschewed any sense of obedience to ecclesiastical superiors, so he took on the slaveholding class. When the confrontation with Commissary Garden occurred, both letters were already written. And when he arrived in Philadelphia, less than a month after the angry session in Charleston (April 1740), he gave the letters to Benjamin Franklin to publish, and then submitted copies to newspapers throughout the colonies. "A Letter to the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, Concerning their Negroes," was a bold attempt to expose the conditions of slavery to America and to chastise slaveholders for withholding Christianity from slaves. Avoiding condemnation of the institution of slavery, Whitefield abhorred the "miseries of the poor Negroes":

> . . . I think that God has a quarrel with you for your abuse of and cruelty to the poor Negroes. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the Nations from whom they are bought, to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take it upon me to determine; sure I am, it is sinful, when bought, to use them as bad, nay worse, than brutes; and whatever particular exceptions there may be . . . I fear, the generality of you . . . are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard if not harder than the horses whereon you ride.[17]

Horses, went on Whitefield, were at least fed after their labor, while slaves were forced to grind their own corn after a day of hard labor. He

175 added that while dogs were "caressed and fondled" at tables, slaves were "scarce permitted to pick up crumbs which fall. . . ." Whitefield discussed accounts of punishments, of slaves having forks thrust into their flesh at the slightest provocation, and of inhuman usage by "cruel taskmasters," which at length brought death. He condemned the fact that slaves enjoyed none of the fruits of their labor while owners claimed cleared, cultivated plantations, spacious homes, and sumptuous fares.[18]

Yet worst of all, added the evangelist, "I have great reason to believe, that most of you, on purpose keep your Negroes ignorant of Christianity." Slaves were allowed to "profane the Lord's Day by their dancing, piping and such . . ." wrote Whitefield, and he added that he was familiar with the slaveholders' rationale. Many felt that Christianity would render slaves less submissive. He chided slave owners for not knowing their Bible. "Do you not read that servants, and as many as are under the yoke of bondage are required to be subject, in all lawful things to their master." One need only observe the blacks of the North to realize that Christianity would not undermine slavery.[19]

Whitefield issued a shrill warning to the slaveholders, reminding them that God would not reject the prayers of the "poor Negroes." Considering their treatment, Whitefield wondered why there had not been more instances of self-murder among them, or why uprisings were not more frequent. But the day might come:

> 'Go now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries shall come upon you!' Behold the provision of the poor Negroes, which have reaped down your fields, which is by you denied them. 'crieth the cries of them which have come into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.'[20]

Slave masters' ill-use of bondspeople had long been documented by Anglican ministers in private correspondence, though never broached publically as Whitefield did. Francis Le Jau was horrified at the "unjust, profane and inhumane practices" of the planters. In 1709 he witnessed the death of a slave woman who was "barbously burned alive near my door without positive proof of the crime she was accused of." The woman professed her innocence to Le Jau "to the last." In 1712 Le Jau opposed the law that punished slaves with castration for running away. He also noted other barbarous methods of punishment. Planters put slaves in a coffin "to punish small faults" where they were almost crushed to death. For twenty-four hours slaves were chained thusly with lead "pressing

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

upon their stomach." Le Jau commented that the "sickness and mortality" which was so high among whites at that time, was the "wrath of God" seeking retribution for the inhuman treatment of slaves. "When I look upon the ordinary cause that makes those poor souls run away, and almost despair," wrote Le Jau, "I find it immoderate labor and want of victuals and rest."[21]

One minister at Christ Church Parish, John Fulton, was continuously "harassed" by white parishoners who resented his efforts to protect the slaves. On one occasion some of Fulton's church members invaded his home with pistols, sat up all night drinking, and slept off the effects in the minister's "best beds." On another evening whites entered Fulton's home, "fired one pistol in my bed, another . . . at my Negro boy because he would not supply them with drink. . . ." Fulton had purchased a slave boy from a parishioner on a night when the man "supt" at his house, "merely to deliver him from the severe usage of his master . . . ." The minister deplored the treatment the slaves received. Some he said were whipped to death, others were branded "in sundry places with hot irons." Planters, according to Fulton, made a practice of "cutting off their ears and scarifying their faces." Fulton was accused of secretly instructing slaves at night and his church members met repeatedly to "contrive and plot" his removal, which they ultimately succeeded in accomplishing.[22]

Such were the conditions that moved George Whitefield to speak out, that led to acts of insurrection so feared by planters, and that generated instances of escape so common in the colonial era. Some parishioners were "forced to come to church with loaded guns." According to Fulton, "a great many slaves" engaged in insurrection in that parish. In the early days of the Society's presence Le Jau noted that masters could not be persuaded "that Negroes and Indians were otherwise than beasts, and use them like such." One of his female communicants inquired of him if it was really possible that any of her slaves could ever get to heaven and she have to see them there. Another young man stated that "he was resolved never to come to the holy table while slaves are received there." These attitudes were reinforced later as other Society ministers continued to privately comment on problems they faced.[23]

Whitefield's public rebuke caused bitterness between himself and many slaveholders. Response against him was vehement, although it apparently did not hurt his cause among Dissenters in Charleston, and may

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 have convinced some Anglicans to do more toward Christianizing slaves. The summer of 1740 was a high point for the young evangelist, despite Garden's accusations that he was inciting insurrection. No matter how much the established church grumbled against him, Charleston residents thronged to hear Whitefield in August of 1740. This is all the more interesting, because he directly referred to Charleston in his "Letter" and preached that their misfortunes were visitations of retribution from God:

> . . . God has already begun to visit for this as well as other wicked things. For near this two years last past, he has been in a remarkable manner, contending with the people of South Carolina. Their houses have been depopulated with the small-pox and fever, and their own slaves have rose up in arms against them.
>
> These judgments are undoubtedly sent abroad. . . . And unless you repent, you must in all like manner expect to perish.[24]

Clearly the evangelist had hit the mark with some Carolinians, judging from his popularity after publication of his "Letter." Most of these several thousands were Dissenters but they were also slaveholders. Whitefield's message may have struck a respondent chord. Some in the Charleston community, for a time at least, attempted to rectify the spiritual distance between master and slave through support for the Negro School. Thus it must be assumed that George Whitefield had a temporary reforming effect on some slaveholders. On the other hand, there is an additional explanation.

George Whitefield was far from a prototype abolitionist. True, he attacked the abuse of slaves, he willingly preached to blacks, and he admonished slave owners for not providing religious instruction. But one year after writing his grave accusation regarding excesses of the institution of slavery, Whitefield used his influence to persuade the Georgia Trustees to permit slavery in the new colony. He insisted that Bethesda Orphanage could not function without slave labor, that Georgia would never flourish without it, and that only blacks could work in the hot, mosquito-infested regions. Furthermore, according to Whitefield, enslaving Africans was missionary work, since they would be instructed in Christianity. Moreover, ever mindful of a need to justify actions through holy writ, Whitefield maintained that slavery was consistent with the Bible, citing Abraham as a slaveholder. He had made it clear in his "Letter . . . Concerning . . . Negroes" that scriptural arguments were on the side of the masters as far as ownership of slaves was concerned, though not in the denial of Christian instruction. Surely those who listened and read carefully could find little to quarrel with as far as Whitefield's stand on slavery. His plea for better treatment was only "Christian duty." And, despite the flowery eloquence of 1740, Whitefield himself soon became a slaveholder, and an absentee one. By 1747, he was using profits from his South Carolina plantation, ironically called "Providence," to keep Bethesda afloat. In the accounts of Bethesda, an inventory in Whitefield's own hand thanks God for "the increase in Negroes," and further states, "I entirely approve of reducing the Orphan House as low as possible, and I am determined to take no more than the plantation will maintain until I can buy more negroes." At his death in 1770, Whitefield was a slaveholder and a buyer of slaves. He willed them, as he did his livestock, his land, and books, to Salina, the Countess of Huntingdon,[25] assumedly for the glory of God and the good of the orphanage.

It was a typical kind of clerical hypocrisy, this "straddle the fence" logic of George Whitefield's. He reasoned that importation of Africans was stamping out "heathenism":

> though it is true, that they are brought in a wrong way from their country, and it is a trade not to be approved of, yet as it will be carried on whether we will or not; I should think myself highly favoured if I could purchase a good number of them, in order to make their lives comfortable, and lay a foundation for breeding up their posterity in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.[26]

No mention of the separation of kin, brutality of the trade, the unearned labor he spoke of so eloquently in his "Letter," or scriptural references that abhor slavery. It was a curious perpetuation of one kind of misery to alleviate another. It was also as logically "un-Christian" as any act committed by anyone Whitefield attacked. Planters admittedly used slaves for profit, but the sacrosanct dualism of Whitefield represents an even greater travesty because he attached to slavery the name of brotherhood and spiritual equality. One could simply explain Whitefield's activities as the workings of the eighteenth-century mind, were it not for the glaring difference between his position and that of John Wesley's. While Whitefield was justifying the institution, John Wesley spoke against its great evil. In 1743, in writing the General Rules, he prohibited "the buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women and children, with an intention to enslave them." One Methodist went to his grave denouncing slavery. The other, equally renowned, died a slave-

•175 holder and justified the institution as a fomenter of spiritual beneficence. Viewed in light of his schizophrenic position on slavery, one can better understand the disciples of Whitefield in the Lowcountry, the Bryans and, secondarily, the Hutsons. Wealthy slaveholders and longtime residents of Beaufort with a branch later moving to Savannah, the Bryan family, under Whitefield's influence, attempted to bring Christianity to slaves in the Lowcountry when few others dared or cared to. They, along with Georgia merchant and slave trader James Habersham, also purchased Providence Plantation for Whitefield.[27]

Hugh Bryan was one of the earliest and most consistent followers of George Whitefield. His father, Joseph, migrated from England in 1680 and settled in the Sea Island region in the vicinity of Pocotaligo and Prince William Parish, where his children were born. Joseph Bryan was reportedly a successful and hospitable planter, particularly known for his long, close association with the Yemassee Indians. This fact saved the life of his son Hugh (1699–1753), who was captured by the Indians during the Yemassee War of 1715. Indeed, the entire family escaped massacre and plunder because of the elder Bryan's relationship with the Indians. Young Hugh was carried to Florida and, despite clamorings for his death, was kept safe by the king. Hugh found a Bible belonging to a massacred white family and it became his constant solace. Although he apparently suffered many hardships, Hugh was released at St. Augustine after about a year. But the experience—loneliness, fear, and suffering—undoubtedly deeply affected Bryan who was reunited with his family. Following his conversion by George Whitefield, Hugh Bryan sometimes exhibited rash, mystical, eccentric behavior which attracted the authorities and on one occasion led to his arrest and near-arrest of his spiritual mentor. Yet his conversion turned his mind toward the slaves' spiritual condition as well as his own.[28]

George Whitefield converted Hugh Bryan in 1740. Whitefield's Journal informs that in 1740 Bryan and his wife, at Whitefield's suggestion, "resolved to begin a negro school." A young actor whom Whitefield converted in New York and who went South, was to be the schoolmaster. This was apparently William Hutson. Whether Hutson was an instructor of slaves is unclear, and probably unlikely. But he did work as tutor for Bryan's children and later at Bethesda. By 1743, he was pastor of a new church, Stoney Creek, which the Bryans had joined, and he had also married a well-born slave-owning widow. The "school" Whitefield

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

1750

spoke of may have simply been the assembling of slaves which Bryan became known for and which got him in trouble with the authorities.[29]

Hugh Bryan, an Anglican, experienced a number of difficulties between 1740 and 1743. His close friendship with Whitefield led him to express ecclesiastical pronouncements against the Church of England and especially to undertake his work among the slaves in the Sea Island region. In a letter to the *Gazette* in 1741, Bryan predicted the doom of the province because of "the wickedness of the people and the sloth and indifference of the clergy." He went on to berate the Church for persecution of "the faithful minister [Whitefield] for not conforming exactly to their appendages of religion. . . ." Bryan was jailed for his calumnies and it was discovered that Whitefield had supervised and edited the letter. The "faithful minister" was about to sail for England but had to postpone departure, post bond, and meet court. Both Bryan and Whitefield apparently answered the charges satisfactorily and the proceedings were abandoned.[30]

Hugh Bryan, however, soon drew adverse attention of the worst kind. His work among the slaves created a stir because of charges that he prophesized the destruction of Charleston and gathered large groups of them under a pretext of religious instruction. Bryan did not admit to the charge of inciting rebellion but did confess his error in listening to a wicked voice, and asked for a pardon:

> I find that I have presumed in my zeal for God's glory beyond his will, and that he has suffered me to fall into a delusion of Satan—. . . . This delusion I did not discover till three days past when, after many days' converse with an invisible spirit . . . I found my teacher to be a liar and the father of lies, which brought me to a sense of my error and has much abased my soul with bitter reflections on the dishonor I have done to God as well as the disquiet which I may have occasioned my country. . . .

Yet the "invisible spirit" was not done with Bryan. This supernatural force directed him, like Moses, to take a rod and smite the waters in order to divide them. Bryan tried this and assuming the waters would separate any time, he proceeded into the sea until he was up to his chin in water. He was rescued by his brother who had followed him and convinced him to go home.[31]

Such antics from Whitefield's most faithful Carolina disciple did little to encourage the cleric's cause among Anglicans. It did even less for religious instruction. Whatever efforts Bryan was attempting were ap-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 parently abandoned. In spite of his apology and his assurances that he was doing nothing to incite insurrection, the Assembly thought otherwise. The grand jury of the province condemned the gathering of "great bodies of Negroes . . . assembled together on pretence of religious worship." This they said was against the law and dangerous to the peace of the inhabitants. Hugh Bryan and his several associates were forbidden to assemble slaves for preaching purposes, or from "preaching to them at private houses without authority for so doing." Thus if there ever was a "school," it was quickly abandoned. Hugh Bryan apparently behaved himself following his indictment by the Assembly. For we hear nothing in the records of his attempting to disobey the ruling, although from his diary it is clear that he did not completely give up on his own slaves. Still, for the most part, Bryan seems to have settled back into the role of a comfortable, although guilt-ridden, patriarch.[32]

The Bryans soon left the Anglican fold, helping William Hutson organize the Stoney Creek Independent Church in Beaufort. The church register indicates that between 1743 and 1756 twenty-seven slaves and eight children were baptized. This is an unimpressive record and demonstrates how little progress was taking place. Yet more slaves were probably being instructed than the register suggests, and nearly all those baptized were slaves of the Bryans or Hutsons. Nevertheless, results were meager compared to the burgeoning black population in the Lowcountry. And Lewis Jones, rector of St. Helena, in Beaufort, reported to Commissary Garden that whatever objections the Church had to Whitefield, it was only through his influence that "two or three families in this Parish . . . have been lately prevailed upon to have their negroes intructed in the . . . Christian faith."[33]

Jonathan Bryan's story (1708–1788) is one of a more solid and seemingly more stable commitment to Christianizing slaves than Hugh's, at least his efforts bore more results. British-educated Jonathan was brought under Whitefield's influence around the same time as his brother. He evinced similar religious zeal but a more controlled enthusiasm. The proximity of the Bryan plantations to Georgia facilitated frequent visits to the new colony. Jonathan was active as an adviser in Georgia, was selected by founder Oglethorpe to survey roads there, and frequently went into that territory for runaway slaves. Hence Jonathan was familiar with the affairs of the new colony and joined Whitefield in advocating slavery. In fact, Jonathan loaned slaves to Georgia to help with their

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

labor shortage. Obviously, religious enthusiasm did not interfere with a proslavery attitude. As a substantial Carolina planter, Jonathan hoped to continue increasing his holdings. But the price of land was high and for Jonathan "avenues of mobility in the Carolina social order were clogged." Thus when Georgia legalized slavery in 1751, Jonathan Bryan settled there that same year.[34] 175

Georgia's founding was closely tied to creating a place for the unfortunate. This, along with the religiosity expressed by the Trustees, Bray Associates, and others involved (like the Wesleys and Whitefield) in the colony, may explain the first slave code. Once slavery was established, a clause supporting religious instruction of slaves was part of the code. Masters were required to address their slaves' spiritual welfare. Slave labor on Sundays was forbidden, and owners were obliged to see that slaves be gathered "at some time on the Lord's Day for Instruction in the Christian Religion." Thus the slave code emphasized the master's Christian duty toward bondspeople. It was a policy most owners ignored on the one hand, and within five years the code was rewritten along the South Carolina model (not surprisingly, since many Carolinians and West Indians settled there), and the religious instruction provision was deleted. On the other hand, this early legal support for Christian instruction, supported by Bryan and others, probably contributed to a more liberal attitude regarding this issue in Georgia. This is most evident in events which led to the establishment of the African Baptist Church at Savannah, which was formed under the leadership and pastorship of Jonathan Bryan's slave Andrew. In South Carolina, a black man named David George probably set up the first black Baptist organization in the South, at Silver Bluff near the Savannah River, between 1773 and 1775. Yet following the disruption caused by the War for Independence and George's removal to Nova Scotia, the Silver Bluff Church found a more hospitable environment in Georgia, becoming the First African Baptist Church at Augusta (just twelve miles away).[35]

Thus by the time of the War for Independence, there were several black preachers in the Lowcountry. Their movements were proscribed, they were frequently persecuted, and their contact with slave masses was negligable. Often they preached to whites or to mixed audiences. Still, they represent the beginnings of an emerging African-Christianity. Most of them either came under the influence of George Whitefield's preaching or were converted to Christianity by those preaching a message sim- 17

> it is a great while before you can get them to understand what ye meaning of words is & yt without such knowledge instruction's would prove vain & ye ends pr[o]posed abortive, for how can a proposition be believed, without first being understood? & how can it be understood if ye person whom it is offered has no idea even of ye sound of those words which expresses ye proposition?[18] 17 197

Ottolenghe, himself a slaveholder, cited as an example a young couple 175 he had purchased four years previously. According to the missionary, he had instructed the pair diligently and forbade their association with any slaves except those at his "Negro school." Despite his "pains in their education," they were in his words, "in point of learning very slow and difficient." He could never send them on an errand successfully unless his wishes were put in writing.[19]

The creation of a medium of communication within the black community undoubtedly engaged older as well as newer inhabitants. As a 175 197 result, elements of several ethnic language families seem evident. Additionally, similarities of Gullah to Jamaican dialect and the dialect spoken by Bush African-Americans in Suriname imply a certain commonality in black pidgin languages formed by isolated societies from similar African roots. No one can say for sure when Gullah began to crystallize into a common method of communication among the majority of slaves. Nor can it be denied that influence from non-African sources helped create Gullah. Yet formulation of the dialect itself was a unique communical experience. Shaping a language reinforced social cohesion and community. With the large influx of Africans coming in during the middle period of the slave trade, quite possibly the dialect took permanent root during that time, drawing, of course from groups of blacks already in the region and already adapting to white culture. The following is an example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect, taken down in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, and perhaps one of the earliest efforts to formulate the pidgin into a literal, written form of communication: 175 197 539

BUDDY QUOW	A Key to Buddy Quow
Was matter Buddy Quow?	What is the matter Brother Quow?
I ble Obesha bang you,	I believe the overseer has beaten you,
You tan no sabby how,	You look I don't know how,
Dah Backrow Man go wrong you,	That White Man has wronged you,
Buddy Quow,	Brother Quow,
Dah Backrow &	That White Man &

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

2

● 175 No hawte bun morrowgo,	Don't let your heart be troubled Country Man,
197 Nusso grandy hungry do you,	Nor great hunger distress you,
539 I hab some Barbaracco,	I have some Barbaracco's*
I bring dem all for you morrowgo	I will bring them all for you Country Man.
I bring dem all &	I will bring &

*Horse Beans

3

No hungry nor so dry	I am not hungry nor dry,
For true now no me yerry	Indeed now only hear me,
Make vawter for me yie	It makes my eyes water,
I cry so, tell me vary vipe me yie	I have cried so, until I am tired wiping my eyes.
I cry so tell &	I have cried so &

. . . . . .

5

Dah time Quasheba tell,	When Quasheba said,
De Pickney he bin coming	She was with child,
I gow go for to sell	I went immediately and sold very well,
De hog me mommo gibe me, berry well	The hog my mother gave me.
Dah hog &	The hog &

6

Von coat I buy um new,	I bought a new coat,
Von ropper I bin bring come	A wrapper I bought also,
Von new hankisha too	And a new handkerchief too,
I nebo bin go tink um nusso true.	I thought of nothing but that it was true.
I nebo bin &	I thought &

7

When Unco Quaco say,	When Uncle Quaco said,
De Pickney he was come now,	The child was just born,
I no go morrow stay	I did not stay till the morrow,
My harete bin knock pum pum on true grangie	My heart beat pum, pum for great joy.
My harete &	My heart &

8

Gor Mighty da nah Buf	God Almighty above!
See how Quasheba do me	See how Quasheba has used me!
Dah Backrow Man he luf	She loved the White Man,
He bring molatto for me Gor nah Buf	And has brought a Mulatto for me, God above!
He bring &	And has brought &

175•
197
[539]

9

He yie, he nose, he mout,	Its eyes, its nose, its mouth,
(I bin good mine for hit um)	(I had a great inclination to strike it.)
Tun ebery mossel bout	Take every part of it together,
Lak Obesha bin pit um out he mout.	'Tis as if the overseer had spit it out of his mouth.
Lak Obesha &	'Tis as if &

The poem, "Buddy Quow," is a fascinating example of Gullah-Jamaican dialect and demonstrates the contribution of various ethnic groups in the formation of pidgin. The names Quow, Quasheba, and Quaco are derived from the Tshi language (Ashanti and Fanti), Africans of the Gold Coast region. Gold Coast Africans, as noted previously, were the first black Carolinians. They were not imported in as large numbers as other groups, but were preferred by South Carolinians, and represent a continuous contribution throughout much of the slave-trade era. Hence their early presence and reinforcement made a strong base. The word "pickney" is derived from the Portuguese and Spanish "pequeno nino" (small child), and barbaracco means horse bean in both languages. This may be a Kongo-Angolan influence since Portuguese ports were in Kongo-Angola and many Africans from that region were imported to South Carolina. The masculine pronoun used to refer to both genders may indicate Upper Guinea influence, where such usage was common among Africans learning English on their native coasts from Methodist missionaries or traders, as previously discussed. Since Gullah is a spoken rather than written dialect, the interpreter of the poem may have lost some of the meaning. Yet most of the interpretations correspond to what is known of Gullah dialect and offer a sense of what Gullah was like when it was a true dialect. Writers who believe that there is no sharp break between Gullah and general black vernacular may not fully consider the historical Gullahs and their creative means of communication in an isolated setting. While there are obvious similarities between twentieth-century black vernacular and Gullah as recorded in the twentieth century, the geographical isolation in which Gullah was originally created points to a dialect peculiar to the Sea Island region, where Africans made their own language adjustments with minimal acculturative influences.[40] In any case, the adoption of a means of communication common to all the slaves in the area was a significant community-building mechanism, and previous African language orientations played an important role.

In addition to a language barrier, ministers realized that the black pop- 175

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

1750

Ottolenghe's statement probably represents more wishful thinking than reality. Most Africans no more welcomed the colonial missionary than they did their masters, albeit for different reasons. There were few immediate redeeming qualities in the new religion that warranted acceptance. Ministers actually offered further bondage of a different type. While there was apprehension among planters about baptism conferring freedom, clergymen were quick to disclaim such intent. In 1710 Robert Maule wrote from Goose Creek that he "frequently made it my business . . . to represent the groundlessness of such an opinion." As far as the Society was concerned "baptism makes no great alteration as to outward circumstances of . . . slaves in this world." For people still close to traditions that espoused the significance of the "here and now," the ministers' reasoning must have sounded strange and shallow. Francis Le Jau made slaves swear to a declaration before being baptized:

> "You declare in the presence of God and before this congregation that you do not ask for the holy baptism out of design to free yourself from the duty and obedience you owe to your master while you live, but meekly for the good of our soul. . . ."[43]

Thus most slaves saw Christianity as representing obedience, duty to slavemasters, and a further tightening of the screws of the bondage system. If this were not enough to discourage interest in Christianity, ministers also insisted that slaves give up Sunday afternoon merrymaking in exchange for religious instruction. "It has been customary among them to have their feasts, dances and merry meetings upon the Lord's Day," wrote Le Jau from Goose Creek.[44]

Such feasts and forms of merriment probably had as much spiritual content as the ministers' Sunday sermons. Festivals, feasts, and ceremonies were generally associated with some sacred or spiritual observances among Africans. What missionaries deemed mere merrymaking was probably naming celebrations, forms of fellowship with ancestors and spirits, or even semblances of initiation commemoration. George Whitefield may have recognized something outside of his own spiritual cognizance when he secretly observed South Carolina slaves on his overland journey. It was a totally foreign and frightening situation for the young evangelist, never known for his physical courage. His experiences may have inspired his letter to slaveholders in which he spoke of the slaves' "paganism" and appealed for religious instruction.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 The occasion was January 1740, on a night of the moon eclipse. Whitefield and his small group missed their path along the seacoast road. The weary travelers saw a light in the forest. Two from the party went to investigate and "found a hut full of Negroes," who appeared surprised at the sight of the whites. The visitors inquired after the planter whose home they sought but the blacks were no help, insisting they were "newcomers." The travelers became fearful and inferred that the blacks "were some of those who lately made an insurrection . . . and had runaway from their masters." Whitefield and his friends "thought it best to mend our pace." But apprehensions had no sooner subsided when the galloping group encountered another eery scene:

> We saw another great fire near the roadside, and imagining there was another nest of such Negroes, we made a circuit into the woods, and one of my friends at a distance observed them dancing round the fire. The moon shining brightly, we soon found our way into the great road again; and after we had gone about a dozen miles (expecting to find Negroes in every place), we came to a great plantation, the master of which gave us lodging, and our beasts provender. Upon our relating the circumstances of our travels, he . . . informed us whose they were, and upon what occasion they were in those places. . . . This afforded us much comfort, after we had ridden nearly threescore miles, and, as we thought, in great peril of our lives. Blessed be Thy Name, O Lord, for this, and all other Thy mercies, through Jesus Christ![45]

The event affected Whitefield deeply, seeing the primitive scene of blacks dancing around a huge fire. It undoubtedly conjured up all sorts of images in the mind of the evangelist—images of black rebellion, "black paganism" and even white oppression. That same month he wrote his letter to slaveholders, and his observances on that moon-eclipsed night represented only a small portion of what he witnessed about slavery.

But it was difficult to convince slaves to relinquish their festive observances, practiced only on Sundays or when away from the immediate auspices of white power. Sunday was the only day slaves could engage in activities unrelated to laboring for whites. Attempts to strip them of this small means of cultural independence must have appeared to be the height of folly. Six days a week slaves labored in the white man's fields, on his wharves, in his home, in his forests, and in his businesses. And on the seventh day, for some if not all slaves, a day of "rest," they were implored to worship the white man's god, the same God whom Africans were told decreed their foreign bondage. Furthermore, even planters used

Sunday as a day of pleasure. Certainly, it was difficult to convince slaves 175 that they should be more exemplary than their masters. These early Carolinians were described as a boisterous lot, frequently engaging in "cursing, swearing, drinking and gaming and barbarous misuse of their Negroes." For ministers and missionaries then, there was the double obstacle of combatting "the strong prejudices" of Africans "grown in years," and "the backwardness of masters."[46]

Not all masters were "backward." Some, such as Hugh Bryan, were atypical in that instead of depriving slaves of Christianity, it was sometimes forced upon them. Bryan was accused of inciting the St. Helena [669] slaves to revolt in 1741, when he was probably just attempting to provide religious instruction. [567] His utterances may have generated some discontent among the slaves since he counseled in words similar to those used by Whitefield in his letter to slaveholders. But Whitefield was speaking to masters not to slaves. As ill-advised and eccentric as Hugh Bryan's statements may have been, he was a planter, and as his letter of apology reaffirmed, was in sympathy with the planter cause. He soon settled down to a less public life. But his diary and letters indicate that the spiritual welfare of his slaves was a continual concern. Still, he seems to have been no more successful in creating a change of heart among his bondspeople than he was in mastering his own sense of sin and guilt. Some slaves were baptized and admitted into the Stoney Creek Church, as demonstrated by the church register. Their numbers were small, probably household servants. And, slaves were listed only for baptism, while the baptism, marriage, and burial of whites was recorded.[47]

Of course, church lists do not tell the whole story. And while few slaves cared to convince the Stoney Creek white membership that they had a "true experience," some probably had to listen to sermons and instruction in their "duty." Certainly Bryan's slaves were rarely deleted from his fervent prayers. He found them inattentive and continued to pray for them. "My servants were called to prayers, but none came," he wrote on one occasion. On another he wrote of it being "a time of trial and uneasiness from the disobedience of servants. . . ." Thus the slaves heard but did not listen and Bryan's frustrations for his soul and theirs seemed to weigh heavy on his heart.[48]

It was a strange relationship between master and slaves. Bryan seemed sincere although his own spiritual enthusiasm was often mixed with periods of gay indulgence and the conviviality so common among individ-

3 Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 uals of his stature. This inconsistency may have been noticed by his slaves. But more significantly, his dualism was evident in the fact that he believed in bondage and protected the institution. He was prominent in the Sea Island community and had an economic stake in slavery. While he preached to his slaves he apprehended runaways. Thus Bryan, while he prevailed upon the Lord, "for my poor servants, that they might be delivered from the power of the devil," he also hired people to help him search for slaves who deserted his plantations for freedom in St. Augustine, and was reimbursed by the authorities for his expenses. Regardless of his individual sincerity, Bryan's bondspeople might have believed a contradiction existed between what was preached and what was practiced.[49]

Certainly George Whitefield's attempt to reach blacks had some effect. His influence not only disseminated Christianity to slaves via white emissaries such as the Bryans and Hutsons, but was carried by some black believers as well. Whitefield's impassioned sermons moved many blacks in the Northern cities and he cites cases of the "poor Negroes" in the Southern districts being moved to tears. What these tears represent is entirely open to question as far as most slaves' understanding is concerned. But in some instances of conversion, the evangelist definitely made a mark. Such was the experience of John Marrant, who left a vivid account of his meeting with Whitefield.[50]

John Marrant was apparently born free, in New York in 1755. He moved to Georgia with his mother, brother, and sisters (his father having died when Marrant was four) and in the South his mother sought an apprenticeship for him. Marrant loved music and persuaded his mother to apprentice him to a music school in Charleston. By the age of thirteen, he had quickly mastered the violin and French horn. Such talents in the gay city made Marrant "much respected by the gentlemen and ladies whose children attended the school, and also my master." As a musician young Marrant was exposed to all the "vanity and vice of the city." He frequented balls and parties, meeting with "general applause" wherever he went. He grew accustomed to staying up all night, was "a stranger to want," and was "devoted to pleasure and drinking in iniquity like water."[51]

This life of debauchery continued as Marrant's year-and-a-half apprenticeship drew to a close. But before his service was complete, Marrant experienced his "awakening." On his way to play for an occasion,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175.

he and a companion passed a meetinghouse. His companion explained that "a crazy man was hallooing there." His curiosity aroused, Marrant went in to hear what the man was "hallooing about." His companion, apparently white, suggested that Marrant "Blow the French horn among them," and vowed to defend him if the crowd tried to beat him for disturbing the meeting. Marrant pushed through the crowded room, took his French horn from his shoulder, and prepared to blow:

> just as Mr. Whitefield was naming his text, and looking round, and as I thought, directly upon me, and pointing his finger, he uttered these words, "Prepare to meet thy God, O' Israel." The Lord accompanied the word with such power that I was struck to the ground, and lay both speechless and senseless near half-an hour.[52]

Marrant awoke to find himself attended by two men throwing water on his face and a woman applying salt to his nose. As he recovered and recalled the nature of his condition he was once again thrust into a sense of affliction. "I thought I saw the devil on every side of me," he wrote, and he began to "halloo" in the midst of the congregation. His disturbances caused him to be carried away for he "could neither walk nor stand."[53]

Upon completion of his sermon, Whitefield went to the boy, and "being told of my condition, . . . the first word he said to me was. 'JESUS CHRIST HAS GOT THEE AT LAST.' " Whitefield talked with him, put him under the care of the Baptist minister, the Reverend Hall, and took his leave. Still unable to walk Marrant was carried home where his "distressed" sister got medical help. But to no avail. According to Marrant, his "wounded spirit," not his body, was in need of help. Marrant could neither eat, drink (except sips of water), walk, or stand for three days. The Baptist minister called on him and prayed with Marrant until finally he was made "happy" in conversion and lost his physical impediments.[54]

It was a deeply moving experience for the boy of fourteen, and throughout his many trials and "backslidings," Marrant's conversion always returned him to the fold of Christianity. His change of heart prompted a piety which caused him to leave the service of the music master and to begin reading the scriptures. This made him a laughing stock in his sister's home and in the neighborhood. He was considered "crazy and mad." Under such persecution, he resolved to return to his mother in Georgia.[55]

message which won over black converts like Marrant. Whitefield was not 17 a theologian in a strict sense—although he did produce a theology of sorts. Indeed he spoke against the clergy's erudite learnedness. Rather than a teacher, he was a preacher, and saw his role in a prophetic sense. He shunned speculative theology and organized religion. His authority was the Bible, at least certain doctrines from it. But he rarely preached from the Bible. His message was simple: all humankind is guilty of sin and must ask forgiveness, immortality comes through regeneration and rebirth through Jesus Christ. Inherent in his sermons, which probably appealed to blacks, was his stress on the mercy and love of Jesus Christ and his emphatic renditions of the benefits of divine grace. His insistence that God "was no respector of persons" found attentive ears. Whitefield's traveling companion, William Seward, noted the numerous occasions in the North when blacks became "greatly affected" by the evangelist's sermons, "especially when our brother invited the poor Negroes to touch Christ by faith, whereby they would gain freedom from the slavery of sin and satan." Whitefield's insistence that "God intends salvation for Negroes" probably struck a responsive chord for some accultured blacks, both slave and free.[58] His message was one of offering blacks incorporation into the Christian spiritual family, of providing them with a spiritual identity. For a group defined out of American social institutions and laboring under restrictions of racism, it was a comforting, appealing overture.

The directness of Whitefield's vision of rebirth and his invitation for 175 blacks to expunge the "devil" from within was one manner of appeal. He often began his sermons with a rendition of his own conversion. Additionally, his sense of caring, his abortive efforts to begin a "Negro school" in the North, and his attack on the treatment of slaves also indicated that the evangelist was at least an ally. While cultural and spiritual differences prevented others from addressing blacks, Whitefield's people's religion emphasized commonality. His capacity to simplify "divine truth" and present biblical narratives and the Gospel message in clear, vivid fashions gained him a black audience. The following excerpt summarizes his message and method when addressing black people. In this case it is the slaves of the Jonathan Bryan household:

> Welcome to Christ's fold . . . This is a mystery . . . for unsearchable grace . . . would Jesus Christ take you . . . even you dispised Negroes and join you in one fold with is people? Oh what manner of grace is this? Would he lift you . . . from the dust, you beggars from the Dunghill, from the depths of vile

> 175 slavery . . . to set you among princes, the princes of his people and to make you inherit the Throne of Glory?"

His words are full of condescension to be sure. Yet it is also an exalted message indicating equality in spirituality. Many blacks, especially slaves, probably understood little of what Whitefield said but *felt* what they thought he meant deeply. Some, as evidenced by the Marrant family, heard him and ignored him. The majority never saw or heard Whitefield at all. But those who did and believed took the message, in their own way, back to the slaves, altered it, and even practiced it under another denomination. Additionally, the disciples of the evangelist kept his message alive among a few favored slaves. Hence arose the early religious slave gatherings at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, around 1773, and the beginnings of a black church at Savannah under British occupation during the War of Independence. Additionally, John Wesley sent his first two itinerants to the American Colonies in 1764 with a doctrine not only of spiritual egalitarianism (minus the Calvinist predestination of Whitefield), but of antislavery convictions as well. Yet in the slaveholding Lowcountry, as probably elsewhere, planters who allowed religious instruction distorted Christianity. Slaves who accepted the religion as taught by slaveholders ostensibly accepted a servile position in the spiritual world as they were forced to in the temporal realm. The "very short summary of religion" which the "best" slaveholders espoused emphasized obedience. Slaves were instructed that:

> There is one God in heaven who never dies, and who sees and knows everything. That he punishes all roguery, mischief, lying, either before death or after it. That he punishes them for it before they die, by putting it into their masters' hearts to correct them, and after dying by giving them to the devil to burn in his own place. That he will put it into their masters' hearts to be kind to those who do their work without knavery or murmuring. To take care of them in old age and sickness, and not to plague them with too much work, or to chastise them if they are not able to do it. That in the after world, after they die, he will give all good Negroes, rest from all labour, and plenty of all good things.[80]

Thus the period of the Great Awakening can be viewed as seedtime for planting Christianity in the Lowcountry. Whitefield's journeys there continued until his death, and left an impact on the spiritual consciousness of some acculturated slaves. Also, Commissary Garden's Charleston Negro School may have had some influence, although it seems negligible. Finally, the Bray Associates made yet another early attempt at

Christian instruction, leaving a record of trying experiences and impediments. The germination process was slow and uneven. Black acceptance and understanding, the hostility of the master class, and the paucity of missionaries devoted to the enterprise were the major reasons for hindrance. Also, the Great Awakening came on the heels of economic possibilities that could only be realized through exploitation of a massive labor force. Immediately after the 1739 Stono uprising, few Africans came into Charleston because of a prohibitive import duty. Between 1740 and 1750 less than 1,900 slaves arrived. However, after this ten-year moratorium the trade was on an upswing, halted only (temporarily) by the War for Independence. Furthermore black population in the Lowcountry south of Charleston increased most rapidly, a trend which continued through the period of the slave trade.[61]

Georgia's slave population was at first bought in small groups. By 1760, ten years after the trade was legalized, Georgia merchants began importing directly from Africa while continuing to purchase from Charleston. It is ironic that the major supporters of religious instruction in the seacoast region of Georgia were not only large planters but slave merchants.[62] Yet the fact remains that many owners offered no version of Christianity. Many slaves concerned themselves with creating a communal environment within bondage, seeking ways to assert their autonomy. Others sought autonomy by fleeing bondage altogether. For a number of slaves, the agitation among white colonials for independence, the resulting war, and subsequent period of adjustment provided opportunities for liberation.

[p. 110 is blank]

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 5

An Almost Chosen People

> "How is it," asked Samuel Johnson, "that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"* 000

> Mingo said *that all those belonging to the African Church are engaged in the insurrection, from the country to the town—that there is a little man among them who can't be shot, killed, or caught, who was to be their general, and who would provide them with arms-–that some arms were provided but he did not tell me where they were.*** 175●

Rebels and Outlaws: White Independence, Black Liberation

On November 9, 1861, a Massachusetts man, S. M. Weld, was going through "old pamphlets and newspapers" in the garrett of Baptist planter William Pope's deserted house at Hilton Head Island. It was two days after the battle of Port Royal. The papers Weld found had apparently been "thrown out and forgotten by the owner," who like every other white Sea Islander, had fled to the mainland at the thundering sound of Yankee gunboats. Among the pamphlets found was one entitled "Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes Charged with an Attempt to Raise An Insurrection in the State of South Carolina." Weld observed that the pamphlet was rare, since every effort was made to destroy all

---

*Quoted from Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," in Alfred F. Young, ed., *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 35. [113)

**Testimony of slave informant Willian, in Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An official report of the trials of sundry Negroes*), 85–86. (113)

[p. 113]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

195 copies soon after they were published because the contents were thought "dangerous for the slaves to see."[1]

Yet William Pope saw fit to keep the document and no doubt spent many hours pondering the intended rebellion. The title of the pamphlet reveals the prevailing attitude about the magnitude of the insurrection. Many believed it extended as far north as Georgetown and the Santee, and as far south as the Euhaws and Sea Islands. Some testimony indicated that the insurrection was even known of in Columbia. Certainly Pope, like the majority of slaveholders, had total confidence in the trial procedure, the validity of the document, and in the verdict that a large-scale, well-planned insurrection was barely averted. At the time Pope also shared the planters' conviction that teaching Christianity to the masses of slaves was tantamount to breeding insurrectionists. The slave insurrection which centered in Charleston in 1822 was spawned in the all-black class meetings of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. On a national level the incident, known as the "Denmark Vesey Conspiracy," gripped the religious sector, antislavery advocates, and proslavery elements, each group believing that events supported their respective philosophy of right. In South Carolina however, and especially in the Low-country, the attempted insurrection was viewed in more immediate terms. The safety of the white population, outnumbered eight to one by the black laboring class, was considered to be in great jeopardy. An examination and analysis of the intended insurrection provides significant evidence about the way in which some slaves put Christianity to use, about the African religious influence in the Christian church, and the effort of whites to permanently trample the seeds of nationalism, unity, and resistance in black South Carolina.[2]

No one who carefully examines existing sources can maintain that a spirit of rebellion and strong will to freedom was not prevalent among South Carolina slaves. As far back as the record goes evidence reflects this resistance on a number of levels. In 1720 a group of slaves in Charleston rose up and attacked whites in their homes and in the streets, killing a white man, a white woman, and, inadvertently, a small black child. Of those apprehended, six were convicted but three of them escaped. In 1730 South Carolina slaves again attempted an insurrection and were reportedly well armed. Each slave was to murder his master during the night and, after assembling for a victory dance, rush into Charleston and kill every white they met. The year 1739 was especially

1750

momentous. The uprising at Stono, discussed by Peter Wood and Vincent Harding, epitomized the spirit of rebellion among African-born slaves. For eighteenth-century bondspeople the price of freedom and rebellion was frequently death, and invariably repression and terrorism. In 1740 the Negro Act, a direct result of the Stono uprising, restricted activity and mobility in various ways. Additionally, indiscriminate, sporadic, knee-jerk acts of violence against the general black population were designed to instill fear and cowering among those bold enough even to contemplate a means of freedom. Moreover, an internal check on the slaves was devised by instituting a bounty system among their own race. Those who divulged any insurrection plot were amply rewarded with a full purse and freedom papers. These measures periodically kept the lid on collective resistance until the time around the American War for Independence. Still, individual and small group acts of freedom continued throughout. A major manifestation of this was flight, and Carolina newspapers are replete with examples. More often than not, individual fleeing slaves were African-born. Philip Morgan writes that while South Carolina's eighteenth-century slave population was less than half that of Virginia's, the most populous American colony, the former's runaway population was four times as large, if newspaper advertisements alone are measured. Morgan maintains that not all runaways are rebels. Still, flight is an act of resistance, and even newspaper notices, according to Morgan, represent "only the most visible tip of an otherwise indeterminate iceberg."[3]

Runaway activity increased after the reopening of the trade in 1750 as Africans poured into the colony. Advertisements reveal a slave society as tumultuous as it was economically prosperous. Slaves fled individually and together. While recently imported Africans may have had little if any idea of where they were headed geographically, other more seasoned slaves did. Many from both groups managed to remain undetected for months. In April 1759, an African woman called "Statira" had "lost herself." She could not speak "one word of English," nor "even tell her own name." Yet she was still at large in September. She was of the "Gola Coast Country" and had tribal markings upon her temples. A Gambia slave who fled his master in July 1751 was still at large in October. Sometimes masters did not even get slaves broken in before they absconded. One slave brought to the work house at Charleston, spoke "bad English," and could not say who his master was. Yet he was able to convey to the other incarcerated slaves that he was among nine "new negro men and 1 woman," whom a white had purchased, "most of which ran away."[4]

No clear line of demarcation existed between American and African-born slaves when it came to acts of escape on a group level. While more native Africans fled than African-Americans, in collective situations they frequently ran together, as the following advertisement from a September issue of the *Gazette* illustrates:

> Run Away from the subscriber on St. Helena Island on the 11th of July last a negro fellow named Mingo, about 40 years old, and his wife Quante, a sensible wench about 20 with her child a boy about 3 years old, all this country born: Also Cudjo a sensible Coromantee Negro fellow about 45 years old, stutters and his wife Dinah, an Ebo wench that speaks very good English with her two-children a boy about 8 years and a girl about 18 months. Whoever takes up and delivers them to me or to the work house in Charles Town, shall have £10 Reward. Besides reasonable charges.

This group of slaves had also remained undetected for several months. By the time the advertisement was placed they could have been well out of the colony, given St. Helena's proximity to Spanish and Seminole Indian territory, or have joined one of the runaway camps that dotted the South Carolina frontier. Indeed, maroon settlements were one safety valve that provided an alternative to insurrection. The existence of these settlements represents an example of organized rebellious activity in the generation between the Stono uprising and the War for Independence.[5] The first two runaways mentioned, though American-born, had African given names. Forebears with strong ties to Africa had left a legacy of resistance along with the Old World naming. The fact that this was a mixed group of African and country-born slaves expresses the cameraderie that could be forged by oppression and kinship.

Another apparently country-born group of accultured slaves made their escape from Purrysburg in the Sea Island region. Two men and a woman with two small children escaped in "a boat with four oars" from their master's plantation. He offered £5 sterling as reward for their return and informed the public that they not only spoke good English but also French and German. These slaves probably made their way to the Savannah River and into Spanish and Indian territory. That was certainly the avowed intention in another case in which a Beaufort slave was "gibbetted" for the murder of one Charles Purry. In his death agony the slave confessed to the murder and disclosed that he and eight others had planned to murder two more whites as well but were prevented by the immediate discovery of Purry's body. The slaves intended to steal a boat and make their way to St. Augustine. The proximity of the Sea Islands to St. Augustine caused planters much anguish. Various methods were used to deter slaves from fleeing to this Spanish settlement. Hugh Bryan spent much time and energy in efforts to locate runaways heading south. Entries in the *Commons Journal* reveal that in some instances white servants joined black slaves in flight and in taking even more aggressive measures. The Bryans, other planters, and hired individuals pursued, apparently unsuccessfully, a white servant and several slaves who, prior to making their escape, killed one white.[6] Thus the common oppression experienced by blacks and whites (probably Indians also) sometimes led to unified acts of resistance.

Slaves who ran away in groups of various sorts, as Michael Johnson has noted, typified the collective resistance spirit and kinship attachment present among rural and urban Africans and African-Americans. But at times the spirit of disenchantment assumed more dramatic and telling proportions. The Sea Island bondspeople, black and white, who engaged in the above plots were not satisfied with absconding which they might have accomplished undetected. Instead, they chose to strike out in a far more violent manner. Nor was the slaves' sense of wrong always eased by mere absence from the masters' plantations. At times a more exacting retribution was resorted to. Some slaves became highwaymen, robbing and plundering the white countryside until they were apprehended or killed. In 1759 an escaped slave thusly engaged was finally captured. During the night he managed to free himself, and with an axe the slave killed the white who had apprehended him, the man's wife, and one of his children. The slave remained free for a month, and on his continued rampage through the countryside killed another white man and his two children. The fugitive was finally caught in Charleston, convicted, and "hung in chains" at the city dividing path for all the population to view.[7] Thus eighteenth-century slave society was far from tranquil. What has often been represented as "planter paranoia" was actually recognition that the black population was unsubmissive, resistant, and, in many cases, very much on the move. Most of the rebelliousness was not collectively organized or planned, yet that is not surprising. Africans and African-Americans were not yet a homogeneous group, often did not speak the

● 175 same language, and sometimes could not even trust each other. Additionally, in a foreign country it was difficult at best to organize movements that would lead to specific goals other than immediate freedom. Still, liberty itself was a determined end.

Yet the absence of notable collective resistance activity seemed to precipitate laxness in law enforcement in small quarters. Repression, severity, high mortality, and overwork was the fate of slaves inhabiting the rice and indigo regions in the last half of the century. But the continued importation of foreign-born Africans engaged in the drudgery of plantation work helped to create mobility for acculturated, urban slaves on whom masters depended for their personal and leisurely inclinations. In the urban ambiance, the slave code of 1740 sometimes faded in memory along with the rebellion that precipitated it. This was especially the case as turmoil leading to rebellion against England increased. White South Carolinians, concerned with the jeopardy of their own political independence and becoming more at ease with an urban acculturated black population, allowed some practices to exist unmolested that were illegal by statute. Slaves in and near Charleston were known to gather in large numbers without white supervision for festivity, frolic, and perhaps more sober business. In 1772 a "stranger" to South Carolina engaged in a series of editorials printed in the *Gazette* regarding the "deluge of enormous vices" that prevailed among the slaves. According to the stranger, laws passed by the colony were "treated with contempt." One of the most important features of the 1740 Act was the provision that no slave be outside plantation or town limits without a ticket on pain of twenty lashes. Yet the writer maintained that fugitive slaves freely walked the roads, engaged in "theft and robbery," and were harbored in the city. Additionally, the stranger observed that on any given weekend, before sunset on Saturday until two hours before sunrise on Sundays, the numbers of slaves passing on the main road was "never less than four hundred but often exceeds seven." Yet, insisted the alarmed citizen, "one rarely met with more than 40 or 50 tickets or letters in the hands of the country Negroes and never more than four or five such licenses amongst those that belong to the Town." Any white man who questioned one of these slaves was either ignored or answered with an impudent, "I belong to my master!" which ended the conversation. Furthermore, it was noted that the slaves carried heavy hickory sticks or clubs which, thus serving as hangers for provision and "plunder," could easily double as weapons.

Through the graces of an "old grey-headed Negro" the stranger claimed to have witnessed much. On one occasion he watched a "country dance, rout or cabal," from a concealed position:

> Every one carried something . . . liquors of all sorts; rum, tongues, hams, beefs, geese, turkies, fowls, both dressed and raw, with many luxuries of the table, as sweatmeats, pickles, etc., (which some did not scruple to acknowledge they obtained by means of false keys procured form a Negro in town [illegible] could make any key, whenever the impression of the true one was brought to [illegible] in wax). . . . The entertainment was opened by the men. . . .[8]

The informant pressed on, describing a graphic picture of social activity among urban and country slaves in an unscrutinized setting. The blacks exerted surlines, insolence, and a readiness to protect themselves against an offending white party with no immediate legal jurisdiction over them. The stranger reminded the public that such gatherings as these were prohibited by the 1740 slave code, because they allowed slaves to take note of their own strength and to measure opportunities for rebellion. In addition to obvious conviviality, the assembly was not without its serious elements. From his hiding place, the informant observed "private committees" whose deliberations were conducted in low, cautious voices so that even other slaves could not overhear. Perhaps these men were discussing means to remedy their own plight or ways of aiding others in hiding. That was the implicit impression the stranger conveyed as he commented on the scene:

> The members of this *secret council* had much the appearance of doctors, in deep and solemn consultation upon life or death; which indeed might have been the scope of their meditations at that time. No less than 12 fugitive slaves joined this respectable company before midnight, 3 of whom were mounted on good horses, these after delivering good quantity of mutton, lamb and veal, which they brought with them, directly associated with one or other of the private consultators; and went off about an hour before day.

Where was the patrol duty intended to prevent such "irregularities and the manifest ill-consequences there of"? demanded the stranger. Why, he wondered, as this negligence so grossly overlooked instead of being promptly punished?[9]

Exaggeration perhaps. Yet secret goings on, solidarity, and kinship between slaves and fugitive slaves were not uncommon. The small white population was engaged in economic pursuits and in maintaining political liberty in the face of perceived British "oppression." Hence it was

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

● 175 hardly possible to keep constant vigilance on the large servile labor force. Most slaves were isolated on plantations and could not gather for large nocturnal frolics and surreptitious planning sessions, or conspire with runaways. Nevertheless, this generation of slaves refused to accept the jurisdiction outlined in the strict legal codes of the colony. The frequency of runaways, evidence of crimes against whites, and other black assertions of free will characterized their response to the institution of slavery. James Oakes has suggested that the only period with claims to parternalistic elements in the history of North American bondage was the colonial era. To some extent in the latter stages of colonial South Carolina, this may have been the case, and here only in a limited sense. One cannot imagine how a padrone or signeurial attitude could prevail among market-oriented rice and indigo planters. And there is little evidence to support a paternalistic argument for that experience among the slaves. But the ideology could have taken root in urban centers like Charleston and perhaps Beaufort, or within planter households where master-slave interaction was not guided by their relationship to a staple crop which depended on a driven labor force for profit.[10]

In the 1770s agitation about human rights, liberty, and equality pervaded the country and was not lost on the slaves. Such discussion increased their sense of momentousness and enhanced an already present desire for freedom. The spirit of the age fostered insurrection activity in the Southern colonies. Many feared that rupture with Great Britain would bring rebellion among slaves. In Charleston a supposed conspiracy was uncovered in the summer of 1775, and in Virginia a planter cautioned that prudence dictated that "such attempts should be concealed as well as suppressed."[11] This logic was not only designed to prevent general fear among whites but also to preclude slaves from taking advantage of white vulnerability and making connections between the two struggles.

When the War for Independence moved south, many slaves made every effort to take advantage of freedom proclamations issued by the British. Under Virginia Governor Dunmore's Proclamation of 1775 and General Clinton's promises of freedom for defecting slaves in 1779, thousands fled plantations in hope of liberty. It did not require urging from Britons to inspire slaves toward liberty. The black population in some regions was already on the move and not necessarily fleeing to English forces. But for many, the British seemed to offer the quickest, and sometimes only route to possible freedom. How well slaves understood the offer of freedom is demonstrated in a letter written by Stephen Bull to Henry Laurens in March, 1776. "It is better," he wrote, "for the public and the owners, if . . . deserted Negroes . . . be shot, if they cannot be taken." This measure would, Bull hoped, "deter other Negroes from deserting." Such was not the case. In the Southern region, prospects of liberty took on new meaning for some Lowcountry slaves. British occupation of coastal Georgia began in December 1778 after an aged slave guided the British in a surprise attack, and continued until July 1782. Charleston was literally battered into submission in May 1780. The British kept lists of blacks given certificates of freedom signed by General Samuel Birch, British commander of New York, and allowed to leave America in 1783. These inspection rolls are useful evidences of social history. They contain names of blacks, ages, a brief description, former owners, and length of time away from owners. While the majority of the South Carolina slaves on these lists are from Charleston, most of whom left during the seige, there are also listings of slaves from the region south of that city: 175

Brass Watson (30), scar on forehead, slave of John Day, Charleston.
Nancy (his wife) (30), 2 small children, slaves of Mr. Quince, Wilmington, N. C., left 7 years ago.
MaryAnn (23), very small, formerly owned by Thomas Cooper, Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Mellia Marrant (30), squat wench, property of John Marrant, near Santee, left at seige of Charleston.
Amelia (6), child of above.
Ben (4), child of above.
Michael Thomas (18), of Richard Garret, Beaufort, S. C., left 7 years ago.
James Brown (21), belonging to William Williamson, Black Swamp, left 4 years ago.
Sally Beauman (25), fine wench, of Thomas Beauman of Beaufort, left 4 years ago.
Lampson Miles (12), fine boy of John Miles, Indian Lands, left 5 years ago.
Sam Hutchins (26), property of Wm. Harden, Indian Lands.
Sara Jones (33), stout wench of Richard Stevens, Port Royal, S. C.[12]

So reads the "Book of Negroes," as the British army approved passage from America for those slaves with their certificates of freedom signed by General Birch. The lists indicate that a number of the "elderly" and "worn out" former bondspeople had nevertheless somehow gotten to New York in anticipation of freedom. Black women figure prominently in the lists, some of whom had been behind British lines, or away from own- 17

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

ish. The resourceful young man managed his escape to British-occupied New York, and was one of those who "received a certificate from the commanding officer," General Birch, setting sail for Nova Scotia in 1783.[15] 17

Boston King and the loyal blacks left New York with great expectations, most of which went unrealized. But that first winter, "the work of religion began to revive" among the black colonists, thankful for their deliverance from bondage. Throughout his war exploits, King had prayed fervently for deliverance. In his many close encounters, King's most earnest supplications were expressed when he was back in bondage in New Brunswick. He thought of nothing but freedom: "I called to remembrance the many great deliverances the Lord had wrought for me and besought him to save me this once and I would serve him all the days of my life." It was a promise not immediately fulfilled, for King was occupied by more practical concerns. Yet the Nova Scotia experiences, the hardships the black colonists endured, and the racism at the hands of white loyalists drew the little black band together and King soon became their spiritual leader. For both Boston King and John Marrant, early exposure to missionary activity, early visionary spiritual experiences, positions of acculturation, together with their unusually eventful lives and deliverances all contributed to lasting commitments to Christianity and subsequent call to the ministry.[16] 175

To alleviate anxiety over absconding property and fear of uprising, some whites advocated that slaves be armed in the South with a promise of freedom as was occurring in the North. In South Carolina, bondspeople were used in many ways during the war, but they were never armed. David Ramsey, a Philadelphian who moved South after marrying the daughter of Henry Laurens, at first considered slaves "too dastardly" to fight. Defections to the British army notwithstanding, Ramsey believed that "abject submission had destroyed every spark of courage in their breasts." Others disagreed, and thought slaves quite capable as soldiers, as indeed they had proven on previous occasions in South Carolina. General Moultrie, a South Carolina planter, continuously urged from the battlefields that slaves be employed as soldiers by his state, especially since they were already fighting in the British army. John Laurens also argued for use of black troops, but his minority proposal was quickly defeated. But even Ramsey changed his mind as British forces prepared to blockade Charleston. Arming slaves probably would not have saved the city from the long-costly seige, because blacks thought it safer to

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 trust "the devil you did not know." But such actions would have destroyed slavery. South Carolinians had no such intention. And even though blacks felt their best opportunities lay with the British, tragedy took a heavy toll. Unlike the resourceful Boston King, other slaves were trapped in the South when American victory became imminent. Although an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Georgia and South Carolina blacks were evacuated from Charleston in 1782 under British protection, thousands more were transported back into slavery in the West Indies and East Florida by British "liberators" during the course of the war. And apparently many of those left behind made every effort to leave, as David Ramsey's contemporary account reveals:

> They had been so impressed by the British with the expectations of severest treatment . . . that in order to get off with the retreating army, they would sometimes fasten themselves to the sides of boats. To prevent this dangerous practice the fingers of some were chopped off, and soldiers were posted with cutlasses and bayonets to oblige them to keep at proper distance. Many of them, labouring under diseases, forsaken by their new masters, and destitute of the necessaries of life, perished in the woods. Some who got off with the army were collected on Otter island, where the camp-fever continued to rage . . . some hundreds of them expired. Their dead bodies . . . were devoured by beasts and birds, and to this day (1785) the island is strewed with their bones.[17]

The American War for Independence did not bring freedom to South Carolina slaves, even though the British presence had shaken the institution more than whites cared to admit. Blacks were largely unarmed, still consisting of many foreign-born Africans and actually caught between two enemies. The condition of the majority of slaves was not greatly altered. Yet their expectations had risen. Espousals of republican and human rights philosophies, the sense of independence some slaves experienced through wartime displacement, as well as white Carolina's renewed strengthening and commitment to bondage, created postwar spurts of active collective resistance. Postwar living conditions also contributed much to unrest, as slaves bore the brunt of the depressing aftereffects. In the city slaves resumed performance of the essential tasks of market merchandising, butchering, fishing, carting, skilled labor, public works, and myriad domestic tasks. Many slaves were hired out to perform various jobs and provide revenue for masters. On coastal plantations rice productivity was soon on the upswing again, and in the upcountry short staple cotton was not long in benefiting from the invention

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

of the cotton gin. On the Sea Islands indigo planters marked time and clung to their slaves, although their new relationship with Great Britain cut off their monopoly of indigo profits. Shortly, a new commodity, sea island cotton, proved to be a vastly profitable substitute for indigo. There was never a question as to whether or not slavery would survive in South Carolina and Georgia.[18]

175
(567)

Postwar South Carolina settled back into a system of slavery which was unbending in its oppression. Signs of brutality and harshness were clearly visible. One 1785 traveler was awestruck by the natural beauty of the state, but also mused on how quickly "heaven's best gifts" were forgotten, "as well as the bountiful giver." Upon visiting a structure jocosely referred to as the "sugar house," the observer was repulsed by what he saw. Here Charleston slaves were punished. The place contained "dreadful machinery" on which slaves were confined and suspended. "I marked the scourge which was tinged with human blood and other apparatus of more than savage barbarity." More revolting than the "machinery" said the observer, was the "viewing bench" designed for "such spectators as chose to regale themselves with a view of the agony of suffering humanity." How was it possible, wondered the traveler, that "a people who have just risen up from the struggles of virtue and liberty should be so insensible of their inestimable blessings . . . as to consign to sining and dispair creatures like themselves and to triumph in their destress." Another example comes from Georgia. Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush noted that on the Sea Island plantations of Pierce Butler, the overseer, Mr. Mitchell, whipped slaves "til they laughed."—"Pain," said Rush, "changed to pleasure."[19]

175
567
(152)

Whatever mechanisms of escapism prompted this "hysterical" reaction to whipping, it is doubtful that pain was turning to pleasure as the usually sensitive Dr. Rush believed. But the statement represents more than an ignorant comment about an oppressive system, since the incident took place on a Butler plantation. This latter fact demonstrates the limitations inherent in viewing bondage from what may seem to be a redeeming ideology—paternalism. While Butler himself can probably be considered as close to any planter in representing "paternalism," this only reveals the inadequacy of the term in describing master-slave relationships. He was known for buying slaves in family units and for trying to keep them together on his plantations. He was also remembered by his old house slaves for having been a caring master. But Butler was often absent, and

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175
567
with an eye toward profit to support his elegant Philadelphia life-style, he hired hard-driving overseers and gave them free reign in his absence. His heirs continued to manage the estates in this way, and just before the Civil War, many "faithful" Butler slaves were sold to maintain that life-style.[20]

175 The postwar runaway situation among the slaves in the country and cities created alarm. In rural areas maroon groups were strengthened by the war with Britain. Slaves who aided the British in the siege of Savannah fled after their allies lost the war and maroons lost their hope of freedom. After the war, campaigns against maroons were conducted by the South Carolina and Georgia militias. The situation was discussed in both states' legislative bodies. Major Pierce Butler frequently expressed anxiety over maroon groups, and in 1789 noted that his island plantations were threatened from two sources—Indians and groups of runaway slaves, both of which were aided by the Spanish. It was, he wrote, "such an alarming and serious a nature as to threaten . . . ruin and depopulation unless timely protected by Congress." He proposed making war on the Creeks, taking Florida from the Spanish, and sending federal troops to combat slave maroon problems. He and other elected officials from his region "sounded" the new national Congress on the issue. But the new government was too engaged in more "pressing" business. These groups of fugitives, sometimes aided by the Spanish, remained part of the Lowcountry landscape even in the vicinity of Charleston. Some could be linked to the wartime period. In one 1786 account a militia expedition attacked a band of about one hundred fugitives who had sheltered on "Belleisle Island, about 17 or 18 miles up Savannah River." The band had boldly committed robberies on neighboring plantations. The first attempt to dislodge the group failed although several fugitives were killed, and four whites wounded. That same evening the whites were reinforced and continued their assault, "but the Negroes came down in such numbers" that it was decided to return to the boats. The fugitives attempted to cut off this route, "but were prevented by Lieutenant Elfe of the artillery," whose company discharged grape shot, killing or wounding several as evidenced by the amount of blood seen afterwards in the place where the shot was aimed. Several days later, after the fugitives had abandoned the scene, "General Jackson" went to the Island and destroyed the provisions, canoes, and boats. He also burned their homes

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

and fields where rice was being cultivated. It was generally expected that deprivation of food and shelter would "occasion them to disperse about the country, and it is hoped will be the means of most of them being soon taken up."[21] 175

Discontented slaves engaged in various forms of violence against the white community in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. In the city the most common act of resistance was setting fires. Numerous cases of arson were reported, and in 1797 three slaves were executed and two banished for attempting to burn Charleston. As historians who recognize the character of the African-American struggle have noted, the year 1800 was momentous. Gabriel's aborted uprising in Richmond, Virginia corresponded in time with the date of Denmark Vesey's purchase of freedom and Nat Turner's birth. Gabriel's attempt in 1800 may have inspired two failed South Carolina efforts later that same year. In September plantation slaves rebelled, killing several whites. Troops were ordered out but the insurgents held their ground for some time in the swamp regions before capture. Later in the year another outbreak began but was quickly dispersed. In 1804 in the Sea Island region south of Charleston, there was "a rumor afloat" that all slaves in the area were planning a revolt. Whites began taking guns to bed. The rumor was reportedly true and whites were saved by a slave informant just before the outbreak. The leaders were seized, quickly tried, and "ten or a dozen" condemned to death. Following execution, the slaves' "heads were cut off, stuck on poles, and set up along the highway, from Purrysburg, the place of the trial, to Coosawhatchie," the old Beaufort judicial seat. In 1805 news of a conspiracy in the up-country created panic and led to the death of at least one slave.[22] 175 567 669

Unrest in the Lowcountry continued, and was evident during the War of 1812 as well as afterwards. In this war between Britain and the fledgling nation, another overture to desert was made to the slaves of the southeast coast. Many responded and left with the British, 3,000 going to Nova Scotia. On one of the islands near Charleston, slaves in 1813 readied themselves for an anticipated British attack which would ignite a black insurrection. The gathering, in anticipation of the British and prospects of freedom, gave rise to a "freedom hymn." According to an informant, the hymn and account of its creation was given to him in 1835 by an English abolitionist-missionary, and was compiled by one of 175 533 539

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 the leaders of the intended insurrection. The slaves held secret meetings
533 on one of the islands near Charleston and the "proceedings were opened
539 and closed by the singing of this "Hymn of Freedom":

Hail! all hail! ye Afric clan
Hail! ye oppressed, ye Afric band,
Who toil and sweat in Slavery bound;
(Repeated)

And when your health & strength are gone
Are left to hunger & to mourn.
Let *Independence* be your aim,
Ever mindful what 'tis worth.
Pledge your bodies for the prize
Pile them even to the skies!
Chorus
Firm, united let us be,
Resolved on death or liberty
As a band of Patriots joined
Peace & Plenty we shall find.

Look to Heaven with manly trust
And swear by Him that's always just
That no white foe with impious hand
(Repeated)

Shall slave your wives & daughters more
Or rob them of their virtue dear.
Be armed with valor firm & true,
Their hopes are fixed on Heaven & you
That truth & justice will prevail
And every scheme of bondage fail.
Chorus

Arise! Arise! shake off your chains
Your cause is just, so Heaven ordains
To you shall Freedom be proclaimed.
(Repeated)

Raise your arms & bare your breasts,
Almighty God will do the rest.
Blow the clarion! a warlike blast!
Call every Negro from his task!
Wrest the scourge from Buckra's hand,
And drive each tryant from the land.
Chorus

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

The British fleet that was "anxiously looked for" never came. And while "the rising of the slaves was abandoned," many took advantage of white preoccupation with the war and absconded from plantation and city.[23]

The last two known incidents of collective rebelliousness prior to 1822 occurred in 1816. In Camden, South Carolina, slaves planned a move for freedom that was ironically set for July 4. At the time, Rachel Blanding was a Camden resident, although originally from New England. She wrote a Philadelphia cousin that the "whole village and neighborhood" was in "confusion" over the fear of insurrection, and that "nothing but the interposition of that Being to whom we are indebted for all our mercies has saved us from destruction." The plan had been "in agitation" since the previous Christmas. The slaves intended to set fire to a wealthy part of town and while whites were thusly engaged, the would-be rebels "meant to have possession of the arsenal . . . and proceed to murder the men," while the women would reportedly be reserved for other "purposes." The jail was filled with slaves, "stretched out on their backs on the base of the floor and scarcely move their heads, but have a strong guard placed over them." For Rachel Blanding, it was "a dreadful situation to be in," believing she could not "go to bed in safety." She shuddered especially at the slaves' "thirst for revenge." They would not hear of sparing even an "old gentleman who is a preacher," never owned slaves, and "devoted his time to preaching to them on the plantations."[24]

As the trials commenced, it was feared that sentencing and executions of those in custody would "exasperate the others to do a great mischief." Camden remained on the alert during most of July. Able-bodied men took turns at nightly guard duty until the sentencing was carried out. Of the nine ring leaders discovered, six were found guilty and hanged and two others imprisoned in "solitary confinement." The ninth conspirator, Stephen, was undoubtedly the divine "interposition" of whom Rachel Blanding spoke, better known as informer. The slaves never knew who the informer was. Orders pertaining to Stephen were that he was guilty and to have the "sentence of death passed at the same time as his fellows, but he is to be pardoned." Even whites were not privy to the identity of the insider, who requested that his master send him out of the country because the conspirators "had engaged all for a great distance, . . . and he knew the Negroes would not let him live here."[25]

According to the *Camden Gazette*, those "most active in the insurrection attempt occupied a respectable stand in one of the churches, several were

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 professors and one a class leader." Apparently the church was Methodist—a portent of plans to come on a larger scale. All leaders entered pleas of "not guilty" to the charges, although Rachel Blanding wrote, "two or three" finally confessed "and died like heroes," stating they were dying "in a good cause." The rebels obviously saw no contradiction between religious beliefs and raising an insurrection for their freedom. On the contrary, as was the case with the Charleston rebels in 1822, the Camden conspirators' reading of the scriptures probably justified rebellion. According to Blanding, one of the leaders, "a professor of religion said he had only one sin to answer for, and that was he sat down to the communion table with white people when he knew he was going to cut their throats as soon as convenient."[26]

Although the town of Camden regained its composure following revelation of the insurrection plot and subsequent punishments, the Blandings did not. Even before the conspiracy, Rachel Blanding considered living in the South "a sacrifice." Despite gala social occasions, weddings, balls, and "great parties," she wrote in 1808, "I can assure you I am not well pleased with South Carolina," and hoped her physician-husband would prosper enough to enable them to exchange the "land of slavery" for the "land of liberty." She was weary of "a land of luxury acquired by the hearts' blood of the poor ignorant Africans." Following the Camden conspiracy, the Blandings determined to move to the North the next spring even though it was against their "interests." "We have taken such a disgust of slavery," Rachel Blanding wrote, "that we cannot feel satisfied here."[27]

Later in the year, white troops battled a community of runaways in the seacoast region near the Ashepoo River. The maroons were a menacing presence as their numbers had increased and their depredations became more bold. They were finally captured and their stronghold destroyed. Thus did superior arms and numbers gradually doom maroonage in South Carolina. But even as late as 1821 an outlaw community clashed with whites near Georgetown. One slaveholder was killed in the attack and several fugitives captured.[28]

This unsettling activity was intensified by the frequency of flight in the coastal and island regions. But most strivings for freedom were largely sporadic and did not reflect long-range planning as did the efforts of Gabriel and his lieutenants or the Camden group. Yet conditions seemed as ripe in South Carolina as in Virginia for an organized movement for

freedom. It came in Charleston. As John Lofton points out, Santo Do- 175
mingo provided a practical example of a successful black revolt, the age offered a philosophy, while natural inclinations and oppression supplied a rationale.[29] By 1822 ideology and leadership were present. The record shows that legions of slaves in the Lowcountry, hoping to spur a statewide insurrection under the contagion of freedom, prepared to take by force what was rightfully theirs. The rebellion strategy was formulated and formented under the guise of an African-Christian association in Charleston known as the African Methodist Episcopal Church. This strategy and the rebellion's leadership reflected the composition of slave society in coastal South Carolina and the spiritual orientation of the insurrectionists. Indeed, the attempted rebellion embodied militant aspects of two religious traditions. It was closely linked with the Methodist Church but was to be carried out under a mystique of African supernatural forces. Moreover, the relationship with African religious tradition may have been the strongest bond among the insurrectionists in their designs. In the Lowcountry, the real language of egalitarianism came from Christian ideology. This did not always translate into support for emancipation, although some whites, for a time, broached the issue. More significantly, the liberal trend led to black exposure to Christianity on a level not previously experienced. Although some slaves may have accepted Christianity just as it flowed out of the white man's mouth, many did not. This latter group used the Christian religion to help provide the genius of their liberation struggle.

Slave Religion in the Postwar Lowcountry

In the Lowcountry, early black exposure to Christianity was largely the 17
work of those previously influenced by George Whitefield, and of postwar Methodists. Although a member of the Anglican clergy, Whitefield, as previously discussed, was not popular with the established church in South Carolina. His staunchest followers were within dissenting congregations. The English evangelist was particularly effective among Puritan-Baptists because of his Calvinist stand on scriptural authority, regenerate membership, and justification by faith. The first Lowcountry extension 17
of the Old England Baptists was the establishment of a church at Euhaw 797
in 1746, for the benefit of communicants who moved their habitations south to these Indian lands and to Edisto Island. Other churches were

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

17
797

country. Other affluent Baptist-Episcopalian members of the slavocracy in the Sea Island region included the Bosticks, the Elliotts, the Popes, and the Fripps. Thus the stigma attached to Baptists subsided. By 1812 the once dissenting faith was a respectable form of worship in the Sea Islands. Lowcountry Baptists had always identified with planter interests and with slaveholding. The Reverend Holcomb lived long enough to see "the flower of Beaufort filling their seats at the Lord's table" for communion at the Baptist Church.[31]

175•

When George Whitefield appealed to planters for religious instruction of slaves, Baptist compliance may have been more forthcoming, in some cases, than among other denominations. His remonstrances did not seem to diminish Puritan-Baptist attraction to his preaching. Whitefield, after all, was a slaveholder himself. Thus in isolated pockets of coastal Carolina and Georgia, preaching to blacks did occur and had obvious results around the time of the War for Independence and afterwards.

As previously discussed, the first organized black religious gathering under Christian auspices in the South was at Silver Bluff, South Carolina, between 1773 and 1775. That occurred on the estate of planter and Indian agent George Galphin, through the efforts of a Connecticut Baptist named Wait Palmer. David George, one of Galphin's slaves, was a convert of Palmer's, and was appointed elder over the little band of eight after being instructed in that office. David George was greatly influenced and encouraged by a black Baptist preacher named George Liele (also called George Sharp). Liele, under the guidance of Georgia white Baptists, had become a practicing exhorter. His master, Henry Sharp, a deacon of the Burke County church where Liele was "called," freed his slave, although Liele continued on with the white family. In his capacity as a preacher George Liele ministered to various plantations as well as to whites and blacks in his own church near Savannah. Liele's master, a loyalist, fought with the British and was killed. Liele remained with the British during the Savannah occupation.[32]

When the War for Independence began, slave owners prohibited ministers from visiting the plantations, fearing that information about the war, especially Dunmore's and Clinton's freedom offers, would cause black defection. With ministers no longer visiting, David George, who had experienced a call to preach under the ministrations of Liele, took over the little church, then numbering about forty. When the British overran the seacoast region, American patriots, Galphin among them,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 fled for their lives. David George, along with fifty other slaves, sought freedom and refuge under the British flag in Savannah. There they were reunited with George Liele, and the little community of Baptists thrived in wartime Savannah. Although the core of the membership was probably from Silver Bluff, it was George Liele's influence as a servant to a British officer that gave the black church its recognition in the military government.[33]

Included in the wartime black church membership were two men who did not take advantage of their opportunity to remain free through British service, but elected to remain slaves, becoming founders of black churches in Georgia. One was Andrew, favorite slave of Jonathan Bryan. Bryan, like other American patriots had fled Savannah. Andrew was baptized by George Liele just before the latter evacuated for Jamaica with the British in 1782. Andrew began preaching in the neighborhood and was brutally whipped and imprisoned on more than one occasion. Those who endeavored to hear him were also punished. Finally, prominent citizens interceded, among them Andrew's master. It was determined that the slaves were "sincere." Jonathan Bryan provided them with a barn for worship, the white Baptist divine, Abraham Marshall, ordained Andrew, and by 1788 the African Baptist Church of Savannah was flourishing. They claimed 570 converts, "many of whom have not permission" from their owners "to be baptized." Andrew, already in his fifties, was given his freedom and the church continued to grow.[34]

Jesse Peter (called Jesse Galphin) was another one of those who obtained freedom by going to the British, but who returned to his master's estate and to slavery after the war. Peter was ordained along with Andrew and became pastor of the reconstituted Silver Bluff Church. In 1793 the church had sixty members, but after that date it apparently no longer existed. This occurred at the time the Springfield (First African) Baptist Church at Augusta was formed with Jesse Peter as pastor. Thus no black church existed in South Carolina after 1793 until the African Methodist Church of Charleston was organized. Why the Silver Bluff Church disappeared cannot be explained merely by the removal of Jesse Peter, although Augusta was but twelve miles from Silver Bluff. Most likely South Carolina planters were hostile to the presence of a black church. George Galphin, an Irish-born man, known for his kindness to both blacks and Indians, was exceptional. But Galphin died before the war ended. Jesse Peter undoubtedly felt his work was more secure in

175

Georgia. He remained a slave, but was given "uncommon liberty." He preached at several places in addition to his church, and "a number of white people admired him." In any case Savannah and Augusta are atypical examples of black early participation in the Christian religion. These churches were closely controlled and carefully watched. They essentially were under receivership of prominent white Baptists such as Abraham Marshall. While the "regulating touches" of white authority reportedly gave the black churches "standing and influence,"[35] this scrutiny probably gave them little autonomy.

David George did not feel the attachment to familiar places and people that Andrew Bryan and Jesse Peter felt, perhaps because he was not born and raised on the seacoast. David George was a Virginia slave whose life had been hard before coming to the Galphins. His African-born parents had nine children. All were brutally treated. George had witnessed the whipping of his sisters, brothers, and mother. At times George was flogged "till the blood . . . ran down over my waistband." This caused George to flee, finding odd jobs, living with Indians, and finally ending up in South Carolina where Galphin purchased him from the Virginia master who was ever on his trail. Although George remembered Galphin as a kind man, he had no intention of returning to bondage. In Savannah, George and his half-Indian wife fared well. She worked as a laundress, at one time taking in General Clinton's wash. George operated a butcher's stall, and rented a house with a garden and field. His trade took him into the country (where his brother-in-law supplied him with meat). George was given a pass certifying that he was "a good Subject to King George," as well as a "Free Negro Man." When the Savannah evacuation began, George took his family to Charleston where he attached himself to Major General James Paterson. When Paterson was ordered to sail for Halifax, Nova Scotia, George and his family went with him.[36]

Despite this flurry of religious activity in a few areas of the Lowcountry for a short period of time, and although several black churches were established in coastal Georgia by the turn of the century, religious instruction was not widespread. If Georgia was exemplary as an area where religious activity was taking place, it also demonstrates how little was actually done. Jonathan Bryan wrote to a London Methodist in 1785 of his concern for the "unhappy condition of our Negroes, who are kept in worse than Egyptian bondage." Worst of all, wrote Bryan, was their

175 spiritual state. While slave labor produced "the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and all the superfluities we possess," they received "nothing equivalent." On the contrary, wrote Bryan, "we keep from them the key of knowledge, so that their bodies and souls perish together in our service."[37]

If Christian instruction among slaves languished in supposedly liberal coastal Georgia, in coastal South Carolina it was deplorable among many Baptists whose attachment to the former preachings of George Whitefield stopped short of missionary work among the slave masses. Baptists were interested in extending the faith, as evidenced by how quickly they spread to the coastal and upcountry frontier. But this evangelical zeal did not extend to the general slave population. Early Sea Island Baptists [567] were involved in protecting slavery, consolidating property, and maintaining a money crop. Like Episcopalians, they viewed efforts of spiritual uplift among masses of slaves as dangerous and antagonistic to economic interests.

175 797 The War for Independence did much to unsettle growth in the Sea Island region. Once the war ended the people engaged in reconstructing their society and reconstituting their economic priorities. Little time was spent on contemplation of their souls. In 1792, Matthew Tate, a friend of Benjamin Rush and an Episcopalian minister, became rector at St. Helena Church in Beaufort. The spiritual life was low according to Tate, who was himself primarily interested in economic advantage. Since there was no other Episcopal clergyman for 40 miles, Tate boasted of the money to be made from conducting marriages and funerals. Also the availability of single, preferably wealthy widows was a notable concern of the rector's.[38] Given such pecuniary preoccupations on the part of ministers it is understandable that the state of Christianity suffered.

175 567 Religion did not assume a prominent role in the lives of either Baptists or Episcopalians in the coastal and Sea Islands region. Indigo, cotton, rice, slaves, and a well-planned social calendar received highest consideration. In 1766 a Philadelphian, John Bartram, visited the coastal and Sea Island regions of South Carolina and Georgia. Even at this early stage of development a certain affluence was observed. Bartram wrote in his diary that the "best inhabitants" had great farms distanced from the seacoast towns. On the farms "they keep numerous Negro slaves, who are closely employed in cultivating the ground, or sowing plank, or looking after their stock for maintenance of their masters." The farms were

maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in 175 opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any 567 urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39]

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of 18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks. (162) The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that:

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that 175 there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a (567) simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41]

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal 175 567 servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no 394 specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of (177) the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817 did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 and a tower, a first indication of a notable black membership at this
567 Island church. In 1819, the Euhaw Church reported a membership of
794 "18 Whites and 4 Colored," and the church at Black Swamp had thirty
white and one hundred black members.[42]

Some slaves, during the "Second Great Awakening," beginning around
175 1800, were exposed to Christianity in Baptist churches. Often blacks
567 were "converted" when no whites came forth. In 1800, Richard Furman
of Charleston wrote to a Philadelphia Baptist minister of the success the
797 new minister at Euhaw Church was experiencing. In nine months, "Mr Cook" had "baptized about twenty persons." Most of them "are Negroes."[43] This is a very small number, but nonetheless demonstrates that actual black membership does not tell the whole story. Obviously blacks were baptized in many instances without being given church membership. While this demonstrates black exposure to Christianity, it also illustrates the paucity of "Christian" instruction.

Even the religious revitalization that began in the North after the War
175 of 1812 and spread to some parts of the South, was not greatly effective in the Carolina Lowcountry. In 1821, a long-term visitor from Connecticut living in Robertville wrote:

> The Religious state of things here it is hoped is improving. A few are enquiring "What they Shall do to be saved" . . . we who have been accustomed to having ministers settled in every village must feel the dearth of ministers in this part of our country where the toilers are ripe for the harvest and seem only to want Faithful Laborers in the vineyard. . . . The inhabitants of this place are all connected by inter-marriages, and I am afraid are very wordly minded and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than the rise and progress of religion.[44]

Although Baptists had no national association, local organizations exemplify how negligible black membership was in white churches. By 1806 there were 130 Baptist churches in South Carolina, most of which were in the upcountry. Communicants totaled 10,560, 3,500 of whom were reportedly black. Sixteen years later, according to the 1822 South Carolina Baptist Convention, the number of black Baptists had not greatly increased. The Baptist Church at Charleston had a black membership large enough to allow for separate meetings with "proper" regulations by 1819. It is questionable how many of the total black church membership was made up of slaves. In the case of the Charleston Baptist Church's black membership, the majority of the congregations were free. Yet an interesting example of possible autonomy is that Charleston black Baptists, slave and free, were allowed to meet together apart from the white church and to discipline their own members. This practice was probably discontinued after the Vesey Conspiracy of 1822.[45]

The first two emissaries of Wesleyan Methodism arrived in the colonies in 1769. One of them, Joseph Philmoore, went to Charleston in 1773. Philmoore, who had "traveled many thousands of miles in England and Wales," and had seen "much of North America," considered his journey over the sandy, boggy roads "the most distressing of all ever met with before." Philmoore's opinion of religion in the Lowcountry was no less negative. The unpopularity of Methodist preaching forced him to limit himself to daytime sermons. Thirty-three years had passed since George Whitefield made his final appearance in Charleston. Long before his last visits, Whitefield's popularity had waned. Methodism was unpopular within the established church. The Methodism of Wesley was even more abhorrent, because it rejected the doctrine of election and was against slavery. Philmoore found an inhospitable people in Charleston who, under nighttime cover, resorted to overt acts of aggression against Methodist preaching. On one occasion, he preached in a theater and was forced to flee "through a trapdoor—used for the ghost in *Hamlet*." Philmoore's short stay had little permanent effect for Methodism.[46]

It was 1785 before the Methodists made another trip to Charleston. Francis Asbury, the man responsible for organization of the Methodist Episcopal church in America the previous year, arrived in Charleston to organize a church. At that time the Methodists were a small, weak group nationally. American Methodists had been pacifists during the late war and their British leader was a Tory. These facts, along with their doctrines and moral stand on slavery, made them distrusted, especially in the South, where the majority of American Wesleyans resided. Asbury and his coadjutors, Henry Willis and Jesse Lee, found that while they had some "friends" in the upcountry, the people of Charleston would "receive nothing." The only group with any appearance of religion he wrote were the Calvinists. Asbury was alarmed and "dejected in spirit" because of the small congregations. Nevertheless, through the efforts of his two associates who remained in the city, by the end of the year a church was established consisting of "thirty-five whites and twenty-three colored." Having no church of their own, Methodists first met in a deserted Baptist meetinghouse. One Sunday they found the pews flung out

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 in the streets and the entrances and windows of the church barred. The group met in each others' homes and even attempted to purchase an unused "French Church." Their unpopularity was such that negotiations were terminated. But by 1787, the determined group had erected their own edifice, the Cumberland Street Church.[47]

Belief in extempore preaching and evangelism inspired Methodists to gather in the public market, the streets, and in private homes for worship, even after their church was built. These assemblies were frequently broken up by the Charleston intendant and city guard. Threats, harangues, and arrests were common occurrences. Services held in homes were bombarded with missiles thrown by youths from families of "standing." Methodists who preached and exhorted in public were arrested for "disturbing the peace." Bishop Francis Asbury noted in his journal in 1788 that Methodist preaching occasioned riots in Charleston, even within the confines of the church building. One such commotion which began outside the church door so alarmed the congregation that "ladies leaped out at the windows of the church and a dreadful confusion ensued." That same night, while Asbury himself was preaching, "a stone was thrown against the north side of the church; then another on the south; a third came through the pulpit window, and struck near me inside the pulpit." Undaunted, Asbury continued with his preaching and insisted that he had "more liberty to speak in Charleston this visit" than ever before.[48]

The early Methodist church was not antislavery in terms of membership, although its proclamations, reputation, and some individual action imply otherwise. Few Southern-born lay preachers favored emancipation even though British-born Methodist leaders like Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat did. From the Charleston region Asbury wrote in 1795:

> Here are the rich, the rice and the slaves; the last is awful to me. Wealthy people settle on the rice lands of Cooper River hold from fifty to two hundred slaves on a plantation in chains and bondage: yet God is able of these stones, yea of these slave-holders to raise up children unto Abraham.[49]

Yet the American Methodist ministry was divided. Thomas Coke, sent by Wesley to help organize the denomination, was strongly antislavery. He and Asbury organized the new church under a discipline that required Methodists to free their slaves or be denied the Lord's Supper and expelled. Although antislavery rules were adopted at the first Amer-

ican Methodist General Conference at Christmas 1784, negative reaction 175●
was so strong that the rules were suspended at a June conference in Baltimore in 1785 on behalf of the entire church. Nevertheless, some emancipationist sentiment continued. In 1795 ministers meeting in Charleston signed an agreement which recognized slavery as "evil" and condemned "patrons of slavery as well as holders of slaves." Chastizing each other for "strengthening the hands of oppression," the signatories agreed that those of them who owned slaves should emancipate them immediately if permitted to do so by law. Where legal strictures prevented manumission, it was decreed that slaves "ought to be compensated for their labor and willed free." They further resolved that those acting otherwise thereby forfeited both their seat in the Conference and their Letter of Ordination. This was the basis of the 1796 "Articles of Agreement Amongst the Preachers" signed by many conference members in both regions. However, no account of the agreement was published in the Minutes, and as the action was binding only on those who signed, it carried little weight. When the second meeting of the whole church occurred in 1796, General Conference's language regarding slaveholding was conciliatory. It affirmed that it was "more than ever" convinced of the "great evil" of slavery, but actually retreated from the previous stand. Rather than deny membership to slaveholders as previously mandated, the new "anti-slavery" stand accepted them into the church after a preacher had spoken to them "freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery."[30]

Thus the Methodist church, though attempting to engage in Christian 17
instruction of the slaves in some areas, took a compromise position on slavery. Many Southern Methodists bought and sold slaves. They were not proscribed for it by the episcopacy, and most were not troubled by conscience. Yet quarrels did develop over slaveholding, even in Charleston. In 1794 William Hammett, in charge of the Charleston Methodist Church, was himself a slaveholder. Yet he was still harassed and accused of negligently giving passes to blacks so they could "traverse the town at any hour of the night," and "turned out of the pulpit" as a consequence. The minister was able to overcome the incident and continued serving local Methodists. Yet he found that opposition came from another quarter as well. Hammett faced criticism and abuse from his own denomination for being a slaveholder. In 1795 the issue created tension and anger although the church majority stood with Hammett. Still some members,

leading accuser in the 1795 quarrel in the Charleston Church over slavery. 17 The "appeal" was written in Charleston in 1796 while Phillips was still in the city. It was published in New York where the author had removed himself from harm's way. Phillips had been arrested and physically abused by Charleston authorities and citizens for public preaching, for teaching Christianity to slaves and free blacks, and for his antislavery views. The pamphlet denounced the "injustices" perpetrated by slaveholders and prophesied their doom. The author of the tract labeled Charleston masters "thieves" and "men stealers" who ranked with the "vilest characters" in scripture, the Sodomites. He attacked Charleston slaveholders for varied reasons, but especially on the slave trade and the lack of religious instruction. Phillips insisted in his preface that he had such "an entire aversion to war, that if the slaves could obtain their liberty by it, I would, *if possible*, dissuade them from it." Yet his unequivocal position came close to predicting violence:

> And you say, you did not bring them to this country, and . . . blame and condemn those who did; but inasmuch as you perpetuate their crime in keeping them in ignorance and in perpetual slavery, . . . fitting out vessels in this port for the slave trade . . . soliciting that the trade may be opened again, prove, that you are men of like evil dispositions with those who first put this villainous and unnatural practice into execution . . . why do you insist on their being kept ignorant that they may be obedient? . . . Is this Republicanism? Is there not some fraud here? . . . If you have divine authority for what you are doing, whom or what do you fear? . . . Why do you introduce club law instead of equity? . . . Is it not more than probably that the very slaves you are now training up in sin and ignorance, and securing as a portion for your children, will be the very instruments of their, if not your destruction? . . . Are not the owners become the servants of servants. . . . Thus the head is become the tail, according to the saying of Moses in Deuteronomy.

The Phillips pamphlet was sent to Charleston, adding more fuel to an 175 already volatile situation. Hostile white citizens were aware of the 1784 General Conference statement, the 1796 "Articles of Agreement," and the manumission activity in the Northeast and Upper South. Thus the association of early Lowcountry Methodism with antislavery attitudes was not without foundation, though such sentiment was not pervasive. Still, proclamations like Phillips' kept whites on the alert for Methodist depredations against "public safety."[54]

In 1802 a mob assembled in Charleston after news reached "leading citizens' that antislavery literature had arrived for the South Carolina

175 Conference from the Northeast and that a Methodist minister named Harper would distribute it. Asbury himself had approved distribution of the pamphlets. The situation "caused trembling" in the city. Nervous over the recent Gabriel plot in Virginia and remembering the Santo Domingo insurrection, Charleston residents had no intention of allowing Methodists to spread the antislavery tracts. The station preacher, Harper, received the papers and at first stored them. When the city intendant called upon Harper, he burned the papers in the official's presence. This satisfied the intendant but not the populace. An angry crowd determined that Harper should personally "atone for the injury he had inflicted on the peace and dignity of the state." Harper was cornered by the mob but with assistance managed to escape. The frustrated crowd turned their vehemence on the only other Methodist preacher in the city, George Daugherty, who was officiating for the evening at the meetinghouse. Daugherty was seized as he left the church and dragged through the streets. As an added indignity, the crowd decided to "pump him." They dragged him to a pump, placed his head under the spout, and continued pumping him for some time, a chilling experience in the dead of winter for a man already feeble in health. A "pious female" passing by halted the assault on Daugherty by boldly stuffing her shawl into the spout of the pump. Another citizen "stepped up with a drawn sword" and vowed to protect the minister at all hazards. Daugherty, though rescued, was nearly drowned and thoroughly chilled. He reportedly contracted a recurring pulmonary infection from the incident that proved fatal a few years afterward. At the 1804 meeting of the General Conference the slavery rules were mitigated by Asbury and two disciplines were published—one for Virginia and states to the North and one for those South of the Old Dominion. Privately the frustrated Asbury wrote, "I am called upon to suffer for *Christ's sake*, not for slavery."[55]

Despite the absence of a consensus among Methodists regarding slavery and religious instruction of bondspeople, in the Lowcountry the denomination attracted few white followers. Along the wealthier remote portions of the coast and even in the cities, from Cape Fear to the Savannah River, Methodist preachers were under a ban of suspicion as disorganizers who endangered "public peace." By 1800 there was only one Methodist church south of Charleston, on Edisto Island. Black participation, where Methodist churches existed, was generally discouraged even though slaves and free blacks responded to the personalism of the

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

Methodist denomination. Meetings were conducted exclusively on their behalf in Charleston, and blacks also attended white gatherings in churches, or went to the homes of white Methodists for worship, love feasts, and public prayers. But antislavery documents such as the one produced by John Phillips placed African-Americans in a precarious position. To attend Methodist meetings was to bring on wrath and physical abuse. The city guard arrested and whipped black Methodist followers for openly fraternizing with whites. Slaveholders opposed granting church membership in general to slaves, but to follow the Methodists was open defiance.[56]

But free blacks and slaves were attracted to the fervent Methodist preaching and their Armenian doctrines of universal salvation and individual free will. Like the preachings of Whitefield, Methodism must have been a welcome change for unlettered blacks from the stern, cold predestinarianism of other sects. And there was the ostensible egalitarianism. Black methodist exhorters addressed audiences of their own race and whites as well during this time, even in the South (although rarely during the antebellum period). Francis Asbury's traveling companion (who apparently also acted as his servant) was reportedly an impressive orator. Richard Allen and others less well known also went among integrated congregations. Asbury expressed pride in the Charleston "black" and "yellow" membership. "The Baptists have built an elegant church," he wrote, "they take the rich while the commonality and the slaves fall to us."[57]

Lowcountry black Methodists often paid a heavy price for their zeal, especially if they felt called to exhort. Such was the case with Sancho, an African-born Charleston slave formerly from an upper-class Moslem family, who was captured at age twelve en route to England for schooling. Sancho was converted to Methodism as a young man by Francis Asbury, which was when his "troubles began." Sancho's plight illustrates the slaveholders' attitude toward religious instruction for slaves as well as the dislike other denominations had of Methodism. His experiences are also comments on the limitations of Methodism as an egalitarian denomination. Furthermore, from Sancho we learn how strongly some slaves imbibed Christianity. Sancho's first master, a Catholic, was incensed over the slave's devotion to the Methodists. According to Sancho, he was beaten bloodily on many occasions because of his religious beliefs, and was repeatedly forced to pull his master in place of a horse.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

The owner held "a double barrel gun in his hand to shoot me down if I should murmer or repine." When this master died, Sancho was sold to an Episcopalian master whose hatred of Methodism equalled that of the first. Sancho's religious enthusiasm was enhanced by previous experiences. The undaunted slave held prayers on his owner's plantations despite warnings and threats. Methodist emphasis on "suffering for Christ's sake" was carried to an extreme in the case of unfortunate Sancho:

> He took me and tied me to an apple tree and one hundred and fifty lashes put upon me and told me to call upon Christ to take it off and also said he was Christ himself. He put me in the barn in stocks and a chain fixed upon my neck . . . I laid in that situation all night—covered with blood. . . . And O Paul I know the reason why you and your comrades sang praise to God in Midnight. . . . When I came out next morning . . . some of the people fainted at the sight of me. . . .

Sancho's seeming contempt for his personal survival perplexed his master who finally sold him to a man who reportedly would "break me of my religion." Ironically the slave breaker was himself a Methodist, and after he "tried" Sancho's faith, or perhaps his willingness to obey (or endure), he awarded him many privileges and allowed him to pray and hold meetings.[58]

Most slaves would not have endured such punishments for the sake of Methodism, or any other religion for that matter. However, some did. Certainly Andrew Bryan's example in Savannah was similar to Sancho's before whites finally believed that religion not rebellion occupied his thoughts. If some slaves took Christianity literally, many more viewed it symbolically. Of course slaveholders wanted bondspeople to imbibe subservient, not militant elements of Christianity. And proslavery advocates had difficulty believing that slaves accepted Christianity without questioning their temporal human condition. Apparently slaves, like Sancho and Bryan did. Although no one can say what these slaves were thinking when offering themselves as human sacrifices, it was not resistance or rebellion. Still, zealots such as Andrew Bryan and Sancho were exceptions. Many slaves, embraced Christianity without explicitly accepting their earthly station. Indeed, later events demonstrate that for blacks, among the attractions to Methodism in the early nineteenth-century was the church's temporary egalitarian posture.

Charleston African-Americans who accepted early Methodism only heightened suspicion and persecution on the part of whites. In 1800 the

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

175

state restricted their right to practice Christian religion, as it soon restricted the right of masters to manumit them. Laws were passed in that year and also in 1803 forbidding black Methodists from holding meetings between sunset and sunrise, and decreeing that daytime meetings required the presence of a majority of whites, with the doors open. While the laws were only randomly enforced, they served to keep blacks away from meetings because of the city guard and patrols. Leagues of white citizens and "peace officers" broke down doors and dispersed "offenders." The Methodist leadership already preparing to retreat from its antislavery position for the sake of the denomination's survival in the South was disheartened and frustrated for they feared that access to the Charleston black population would be denied altogether. Asbury wrote that while "the rich among the people never thought us worthy to preach to them," they did sometimes give the slaves liberty to hear the Methodists and join their church. But now he noted, "it appears the poor Africans will no longer have this indulgence." Few slaves were allowed the liberty of attending daytime services, since they often worked until sunset. Thus to deprive them of the opportunity to attend worship in the evening was to prevent their church attendance altogether. The absence of black worshippers was keenly felt in Charleston. Night preaching at the Cumberland Church was not the same. "O, what a change for the worse," wrote itinerant James Jenkins in 1801. Customarily the galleries were "filled with the colored people," whose "most cheerful and delightful singing" rang throughout the church. Now Jenkins lamented, "there were not exceeding two or three to be seen, and they apparently afraid to show themselves."[59]

The message of white proslavery Carolinians did not fall on deaf ears. The Methodist church, like other denominations in the South, was already accommodating slavery. In 1800 Jenkins, on higher authority, ceased giving the sacraments to blacks. In order to prosper in the white community, the church needed to divest itself of antislavery attitudes and advocates. Also, rationalized the Methodists, to obtain access to the slaves, as the leadership desired, any teaching which even implicitly encouraged emancipation had to be silenced. In 1808 efforts to regulate conference members' proslavery activities were rescinded. The General Conference gave annual conferences jurisdiction over this issue. Asbury had already concluded that the church should work for the slaves' souls and amelioration of their condition rather than for their liberation.[60] In Charleston, as antislavery ardor waned, Methodists were gradually accepted. Blacks slowly returned to worship in large numbers. In 1793, the Charleston Church had 280 black and 65 whites as members. One year later the numbers had risen slightly for the entire state but not significantly in Charleston. This changed as Methodists moved away from a stand against slavery. Black membership rose to 3,128 in 1812 and in 1815 membership of the Charleston Methodist Church stood at 3,793 blacks and 282 whites. Methodists were the only denomination in Charleston that had such massive numbers of African-Americans on its membership rolls. Thus, in South Carolina close contact with Methodism was evident in Charleston among slaves and free blacks, and in regions farther north and west. For the rest of the Lowcountry slave population, not living in the midst of white society, large scale Christian instruction remained a movement of the future.[61] What slaves knew of Christianity in the country region they learned mainly from each other.

The Price of Freedom

Early liberalism within the Methodist church gave rise to a black leadership that helped foment seeds of organized insurrection among slaves in Charleston which may have spread through the coastal lowlands and surrounding Sea Islands. Soon after the church organized nationally, the General Conference took a significant step in gaining black converts by encouraging the development of a black ministry. Obviously this was more of a reality in the North than in the South. A ruling was passed, over strong opposition from Southern preachers, to ordain local black deacons where they had their own houses of worship. Desire for autonomy among blacks in the North led to establishment of independent churches before the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1794 Richard Allen of Philadelphia organized a separate black Methodist congregation. In 1799 Bishop Asbury ordained him deacon, and later elder of the Methodist Episcopal church. Allen's church was Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, fondly known as "Mother Bethel." But in Philadelphia the last vestige of ties with white Methodism were not truly broken until 1816. At that time, after a ten-year struggle with the General Conference, the blacks won, through a court order, the right to deny pulpit access to ministers of the white-controlled conference. It was a celebrated moment of independence and emergence of a black denomination. From this beginning sprang sister branches of African Methodist churches. That year five African churches had enough strength to bind together into one formal organization which embraced not only northern cities but congregations in Delaware and Maryland as well. With an eye toward joining this connection, African-American Methodists of Charleston created their own African Methodist Association.[62]

At a time when bondage in South Carolina was established more firmly than ever, the Methodist church was one area where urban slaves could experience a modicum of autonomy and freedom of spiritual expression. Black Methodists had enjoyed an independent quarterly conference in the early 1800s. They had control of their own collections from which they distributed to needy members of their community, and they maintained internal jurisdiction over the church trial of black members. Although many facets of black life contributed to seeds of discontent, the loss of this control over their religious life prompted visible action. White Methodists first moved against the black quarterly conference, abolishing it in 1815. Soon thereafter Charleston black Methodists contacted the Philadelphia AME Church, sending two representatives, Morris Brown and Henry Drayton, to be ordained for pastorates. Dispute over custody of a black burial ground gave the black secessionists their immediate pretext for withdrawal from the white organization. Led by Morris Brown, most of the black deacons, called class leaders, and over four-fifths of the 6,000 black worshipers removed their membership from the three white Methodist churches. This was clearly an illegal act and a move of group assertion, precipitating protests from white church leadership and repression from the authorities. In 1817 blacks organized the Charleston African Association, establishing several churches out of their massive numbers, one on Anson Street, one on Cow Alley, and one in Hampstead, the latter being most closely linked to the rebellion attempt. In December 1817, when blacks began holding worship, 469 were arrested for disorderly conduct. In 1818 the city guard arrested 140 blacks from the Hampstead Church including Morris Brown. The black Methodists were charged with instructing slaves without the presence of whites. "Bishop" Brown and four ministers were sentenced to serve either a month in jail or banishment from the state. Brown chose jail. Eight other black ministers were sentenced to floggings, fines, and banishments.[63]

The 1818 incident did more than any other to arouse the black community of Charleston. Abuse of their religious leaders brought home the

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

●175

fact that even spiritual liberty for bound and free African-Americans would be denied. Morris Brown was an exemplary figure in the black community. A prosperous shoemaker, Brown, unlike most well-to-do men of color, shunned false elitism and made every effort to bridge class-caste distinctions between slave and free or light and dark people of African origin. Brown's loyalty was with the lot of the slaves rather than free blacks. As head of the independent black Methodist Association, his congregations consisted primarily of slaves. A man of little education, Brown purchased members of his race specifically to manumit them before laws prohibited this. He hoped for legal sanction for the African Association even though harrassment, arrests, and physical abuse of black members continued. A group of freedmen petitioned the state legislature for permission to conduct separate religious worship. The petition was denied, yet the black Methodists continued their meetings.[64]

Finally, the closing of the black church in 1821 was apparently the final blow for most of the leading conspirators. A total account of the 1822 insurrection attempt is not within the purview of this study. Other scholars and observers have addressed events leading up to the attempted insurrection, its disclosure, and its effects on blacks and whites in South Carolina. At least one writer has maintained that there was actually no conspiracy at all.[65] However, the evidence supports the most widely held opinion that a plan of insurrection was in effect in Charleston. Uses of Christian ideology and African spirituality were essential in recruiting and in maintaining a large black following to carry out the insurrection. Within the leadership these two religious traditions nourished the rebels and were especially represented in Denmark Vesey and Gullah Jack. Vesey was a free "black" man and perhaps the first to contemplate the conspiracy. This has given rise to the notion that the insurrection was the work of free men more than slaves. Free men may have assented to the conspiracy as some evidence suggests. Yet the insurrectionists were, with the exception of Vesey, slaves from a variety of backgrounds—skilled artisans, rural people, African-born, and country-born.

Denmark Vesey, if not American-born, certainly represented black acculturation in other respects. Urbane, politicized, well-read, revolutionary, perhaps even a Christian, Vesey turned the black defection from the white Methodist Church into a dramatization of the plight of both slave and free African-Americans. Testimony indicates that the conspiracy was four years in the planning, corresponding to the period when

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

slaves met in unsupervised assemblies for Methodist class meetings after their withdrawal from white churches. One black leader even stated that the African Church "met for this very purpose," but that in 1820, when a group from the Anson Street Church was "taken up," plans were temporarily shelved. Vesey and his closest associates, two of whom (Ned Bennet and Peter Poyas) were deacons, used weekly class meetings to discuss revolutionary passages in the Old Testament, as a forum for deploring the African-American condition and as a means to convey the political implications of the national debate over slavery. "He read to us from the Bible, how the Children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt from Bondage," confessed Rolla Bennett, one of Vesey's trusted who broke under pressure. Others proclaimed similar statements. The slaves' situation was compared with that of the Israelites. Favorite passages were from the book of Zachariah, especially the fourteenth chapter. Vesey and Poyas interpreted the chapter as predicting the doom of those who had enslaved or fought against God's chosen, and in this instance they substituted their own race for the Israelites. "My man," insisted Peter to one of the recruits, "God has a hand in it. We have been meeting for four years and are not betrayed."[66]

The harsh justice and strict moralistic tone of the Old Testament was also adopted by the slaves. None was to be spared. Vesey "read from the Bible where God commanded, that all should be cut off, both men, women and children," confessed one of the recruits. And the leaders insisted that "it was no sin for us to do so, for the Lord had commanded us to do it." Still some followers objected to the killing of women and children. The leaders would not hear, answering "what was the use of killing the louse and leaving the nit." Total destruction was not only prudent, but in keeping with the Word of God. Other recruits, similar to those in the 1816 Camden conspiracy, wondered about the ministers, believing that they at least should be spared. But white preachers were considered especially guilty. Vesey commanded:

> Ministers were to be killed except a few who were to be saved and showed the different passages in the Bible from which Denmark preached (& the rest) and they were to be asked, Why they did not preach up this thing (meaning the passages on liberty & C) to them before. . . .[67]

17

One such passage was from Exodus. The first chapter deals with enslavement of Jews by the Egyptians, as undeserved a bondage as that of black servitude. Another favorite was Exodus 21:16:

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

cules and the Waggoner whose waggon was stalled, and he began to pray, and Hercules said, you fool put your shoulder to the wheel, whip up the horses and your waggon will be pulled out; that if we did not put our hand to the work and deliver ourselves, we should never come out of slavery."[70] 17

Thus Vesey appealed to slaves through a kind of Greek rationalism as well as through his knowledge of the Bible. Biblical recounting of the struggle against bondage provided a major ideological weapon with which to reach the urban slaves who accepted Methodism. Yet even the most edifying features of the adopted religion would not be entirely acceptable or understood outside of the urban milieu. And even in the city the old ways died slowly. Many in the Methodist Church were African-born, nearly all of them slaves and not living in the "privileged" circumstances of the leadership. Hence, Vesey needed to draw partly on an African spiritual heritage. Vesey may have known of Boukman, the vodun high priest in the Santo Domingo revolt. Boukman used African religion as a conspiracy medium even before Toussaint joined the insurrection. Under a banner of the African god of revenge, he and his thousands of followers began the rebellion that brought terror to whites, freedom to slaves, and independence to the black island.[71] Similarly, in South Carolina the real spiritual force that bound the majority of known insurrectionists from Charleston to the country region, from the mainland to the islands, was the African priest Gullah Jack. 1750

Jack, the slave of Paul Pritchard, and, like Vesey, a member of the Hampstead Church, reportedly advocated the rebellion when the black church members were first harassed and abused in 1818. Thus his association with the conspiracy was of the longest duration along with the original six first executed. If Denmark Vesey was the chief theoretician and Peter Poyas the arch plotter and organizer, then Gullah Jack was the religious embodiment of the movement. Jack's influence over the slaves did not derive from his role in the African Methodist Church but from his service as priest and doctor. He was African-born, a little man with "small feet and hands" whose trademark up to the time of his capture was a set of huge black whiskers. To avert capture after discovery of the first attempted revolt, Jack removed this symbol of his power. Jack headed the Gullah Society and his activities and recruiting efforts occurred in and outside of Charleston. As a force within the movement, he was well known among all the slaves. The arch-conspirators told recruits that they would be immune from death or injury at the hands of whites through Gullah Jack's potion and power. One follower related:

175

> He gave me some dry food, consisting of parched corn and ground nuts, and said eat that and nothing else on the morning it breaks out, and when you join us as we pass put into your mouth this crab-claw and you can't then be wounded, and said he, I give the same to the rest of my troops—if you drop the large crab-claw out of your mouth, then put in the small one.[72]

Jack's charm, the crab-claw, and his dietary instructions are reminiscent of the BaKongo *nkisi*. The *nkisi* charm was a preserver, protector of life, and a healing agent. *Nkisi* derived its power from "spirit-embodying" materials which took on life, and from the user's confidence in its powers. Among the BaKongo, the "foot of a hen" and other claws suggest the captivating power of the spirit of the charm.[73]

Recruitment of slaves under the banner of Jack's mystical powers and invincibility may have been more effective than biblical rhetoric. Those who testified against him cowered in his presence. Jack apparently combined the positive powers of *nkisi* with the malevolent forces of *kindoki* to control the recruits. According to the Court, it was "not without considerable difficulty" that witnesses were convinced they need not fear Jack's "conjurations." While Jack was alive only one member of his Gullah Society spoke against him, at great fear for his life:

> Gullah Jack is an enemy of white people. I attended a meeting at his house and he was the head man there. . . . Jack was my leader he is head of the Gullah Company. I heard that among them they had charms. Jack said if any man betrayed him, they would injure him, and I was afraid to inform. . . . If I am accepted as a witness and my life spared, I must beg the court to send me away from this place, as I consider my life in great danger from having given testimony. . . . I was afraid of Gullah Jack as a conjurer.

Only after the execution of Gullah Jack on July 12, 1822, did the extent of his participation in the rebellion and its massive organizational scope surface. His death released a wave of recriminations against him and his associates that led to many arrests and deaths.[74]

In the New World setting the role of African diviners such as Gullah Jack and Boukman assumed broader proportions. They were not only interpreters of the supernatural but had sociopolitical functions as well. The most active center of the Vesey conspiracy, aside from the African Church meetings, was Bulkey's farm where Jack's Gullah Society held its monthly meetings and planning sessions and also received intelligence from the country and city about the state of the rebellion. "Peter Poyas and others . . . came to the farm . . . and sang and prayed all night," confessed one informant. At another meeting Gullah Society members "roasted a fowl and ate it half-raw—as evidence of union." The sacrificial fowl is significant in African spiritualism. To kill a chicken, usually a white one, symbolically kept away bad spirits and ill will. In Santo Domingo on the eve of the slave rebellion, Boukman and his men uttered vodun incantations and sucked the blood of a "stuck pig." Both symbols of solidarity are reminiscent of Upper Guinea secret [redacted] initiation rites and BaKongo *minkisi* ritual, serving an expanded function. C.L.R. James reminds us that these prayers and supplications summoned forth courage against a powerful enemy:

> The God who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm . . . he watches us. He sees all the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works. Our god who is good to us orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of whites who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty which speaks in the hearts of us all.[75]

Gullah Jack was also in charge of arms and referred to as "the general." He insisted that only African-born slaves could be trusted with information about weaponry, and even that group had to be limited. Jack consulted with other slaves who reportedly had divinely dispensated spiritual power. There was the "Old Daddy," with whom Jack met on Bulkey's farm, an aged African, "marked on both sides of his face." Though too old actually to participate in the rebellion, "Old Daddy" was privy to much information, and a source of inspiration for Jack, who visited him often. There was the old blind cartman, Philip, who could discern the expression on a recruit's face despite his blindness. Philip, a seer born "with a caul," was thusly empowered with ability to foretell the future and see spirits. Philip was also a preacher in the African Church. One recruit, introduced to the plot in the old man's presence, expressed hesitancy merely by his timorous facial expression and uneasiness, not by verbal utterances. Yet the recruit testified that the blind man perceived his fear and paraphrased scripture, asking, " 'Why should thy heart be troubled?' " The greatly alarmed man joined the movement, believing that his thoughts could be deciphered. Philip, as a fortuneteller encouraged the conspirators and at first foreshadowed victory. Later, however, he urged the rebels to " 'give up the business' " because " 'the white people could fire five times while they fired once.' "[76]

175 Jack's spiritual and political protégé was Tom, a blacksmith who reportedly made pikes and other weapons for Gullah Jack, and helped hide kegs of powder. The two were inseparable according to testimony. " 'When you don't see me and see Tom, you see me,' " Jack told his followers. Tom's blacksmith shop was a meeting place where a white youth who worked for Tom saw Jack frequently. Jack appeared even at mealtime according to the youth. And Tom's owner repeatedly warned him about associating with Gullah Jack but to no avail. They mostly "spoke in Gullah which I do not understand," reported the youth. He remembered watching Tom make a foot-long knife and this testimony alone sent the blacksmith to the gallows. Few people knew the whereabouts of the arms but all knew of their existence and many had seen weapons. Some were found on Bulkey's farm where the Gullahs met. Despite the small number, the discovery created a sense of terror. Yet because no one discovered a large cache of weapons does not necessarily indicate that it did not exist, but perhaps was well hidden. The Gullah Society was the most unified and trusted group of conspirators as well as the most resolute. They revealed nothing even as they approached death. The white youth testified that "Tom said that after the people were taken up, that he would not do as some had done, tell upon one another for money." Tom was true to his word. He remained at large for five days after his mentor was arrested, was confined for fifteen days before being executed, and probably endured torture. He never broke his silence.[77]

Tom may have been ordained by Gullah Jack to carry on the struggle if opportunity permitted, as Jack attempted to do when the first six leaders were arrested. For Jack decided to proceed with the rebellion after initial revelations prompted the first arrests. Originally a rescue of Vesey and the others was discussed. Realizing the unlikelyhood of success, the men opted for a move on the city to be led by Jack's Gullahs and those country slaves now commanded by Charles Drayton. In the short interim between the executions of the first six leaders on July 2, and the revelation that the danger was not past, Jack told his men to ready themselves. Hopefully if the Gullahs and other country slaves began the revolt, this would rally the urban slaves fearful of being named by those already "taken up." It was a bold attempt to salvage the rebellion and maintain unity. Undoubtedly Vesey and the others met death so audaciously because they knew the extent of the conspiracy and believed the rebellion would go on. It might have succeeded had not Jack been com-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175

mitted on July 5. The testimony of the state's chief witness was verified by others:

> On Monday, 1st July, Charles Drayton told me that there would be an insurrection on the morning of 6th July, as soon as the guards were turned in—he said he commanded the country born company . . . Jack told me on the 1st July the same thing. . . .[78]

Gullah Jack's band was implicated more than any other group and most of the testimony against Jack and these men came to light only after the leader's reportedly undignified exit from life. The Official Report stated that for one professing such power and invincibility, Jack met his end uncourageously unlike the other leaders. At the pronouncement of the death sentence he reportedly begged for more time. When taken to the scaffold, "he gave up his spirit without firmness or composure."[79] This, perhaps more than any other factor, shook the faith of the insurgents and began a wave of confessions, implications, and accusations among some of the most deeply involved. It surely made faith in African spiritual prowess waiver and perhaps tied slaves closer to the slaveholders' religion, seemingly more powerful than theirs. Traditional beliefs had failed the insurgents as Gullah Jack's courage seem to fail him in the last hour. While he never revealed any information about the plot, his failed power symbolized the African-Christian cultural limbo of the slaves. Both traditions contained tactics suitable for liberation. Many Africans were members of the African Methodist church but feared and revered Gullah Jack as a diviner. "Until Jack was taken up and condemned to death," confessed one slave, "I felt as if I was bound up, and had not the power to speak one word about it. Jack charmed Julius and myself."[80] The power of Gullah Jack, however, did not withstand the test of indestructibility against white repression and force. Hence belief in the power of the old ways was visibly shaken though not immediately supplanted by Christianity. In passing sentence on Gullah Jack, the court mocked his power and his "gods":

> Your boasted charms have not preserved yourself and of course could not protect others. Your altars and your Gods have sunk together in the dust. The airy spectres, conjured by you, have been chased away by the superior light of Truth, and you stand exposed, the miserable and deluded victim of offended justice. Your days are literally numbered . . . and all the Powers of Darkness cannot rescue you from your approaching Fate![81]

175 Yet Jack's boldness as an organizer and spiritual force had a deep logic within it. He warned the insurgents that African charms would not protect them against the treachery of their own color. This internal betrayal, distrust, and division among followers doomed the movement. The diviner's pronouncement was prophetic, for the seat of the slaves' undoing was found within themselves. Still, the 1822 conspiracy was an impressive collective militant effort, politically skillful and astute in its attempt to encompass all of the dispossessed blacks, even those who were quasi-free. Testimony conflicted, but a few free blacks besides Vesey were reportedly involved. Others may have gone undetected. Even the illustrious Morris Brown was implicated, although some witnesses denied this. Most testimony was second hand. But some insisted that Gullah Jack "had gone to Father Brown to ask him whether he would sanction the insurrection, and Morris Brown replied, 'if you can get men go on, but don't mention my name. I am going shortly to the North and I shall hear there, what you are about.' " Brown returned to Charleston to defend himself though eventually banished from the state. Another free black minister formerly harassed and brutalized because of his association with the African church reportedly approved of the plan, stating, a "little spanking with the sword was over due to the whites."[82] Most free blacks who were interrogated were released. The movement, clearly meant to be a slave revolt, nevertheless, attempted to achieve unity by bridging occupational, regional, and cultural barriers. The Vesey Conspiracy, though never pulled off, represented one of the strongest demonstrations of solidarity and racial unity in the history of North American slave revolts.

The argument of whether acculturated urban or isolated rural slaves were more given to rebelliousness has been addressed by a number of American historians.[83] In the case of the 1822 movement, the Conspiracy bridged these distinctions. Liberty for urban slaves was an illusion. Unable to reap the proceeds and benefits of their own labor, no longer able to look forward to purchasing their freedom or to free family members, these frustrated laborers and artisans provided an important leadership element. Although "privileged" to learn a trade, carry on the master's business, or allowed to become literate, they were still slaves. The modicum of flexibility and autonomy they were given only fed the contradiction. The rebel leaders were conscious men, aware of their worth yet no less bound than workers in the field. True they were spared the dull, degrading labors of field work, but as they used their opportunity to sharpen and cultivate their intellect their discontent became only more gnawing. Of course whites were incredulous at this logic and puzzled when "indulged" slaves sought open rebellion. For example, John the coachman of Elias Horry, was apprehended and implicated in the Conspiracy. The disbelieving master reportedly turned to his slave:

> 'Tell me, are you guilty? For I cannot believe unless I hear you say so.'
> 'Yes' replied the Negro.
> 'What were your intentions?'
> 'To kill you, rip open your belly and throw your guts in your face.'[84]

However, acutely oppressed African-born slaves, with strong ties to Africanity, formed the backbone of the rebellion effort. All of the leaders recognized their crucial role and knew that success depended on their assent and participation. Few doubted that it would be forthcoming. Planning and leadership came from the acculturated. But the rank and file were made up of plantation slaves. In this group the leaders placed the utmost confidence. "Let us assemble a sufficient number to commence the work with spirit and we'll not want men, they'll fall in behind us fast enough."[85] Also, the rural slaves, along with Jack's Gullahs, attempted to see the rebellion through before the capture of Jack.

The endeavor was a fusion of those at the bottom and those who could never aspire to the top, a lesson learned from Santo Domingo and Gabriel Prosser. The majority of African-Americans were at least united in their alienation from white culture and society. In the town the slaves met at class meetings and in each other's homes for planning sessions. As time for the rising neared, Vesey refused to work at carpentry and Jack refused to pay his mistress his wages. Both engaged themselves fully in the rebellion. Jack was instrumental in reaching rural and African-born slaves. But Vesey also traveled extensively in the countryside. As a free man and a respected carpenter, he traversed outside of the city limits without arousing suspicion. Lieutenants also worked the country parishes where kinship ties existed between those on the plantations and those in the city. Gullah Jack's haunt, Bulkey's farm, was on the outskirts of town, and the black overseer, Billy, was drawn into the insurrection. Jesse Blackwood, one of the first six leaders executed after the June disclosures, was expressly engaged in preparing and alerting plantation slaves. On one estate in St. John's Parish, forty miles south of

Charleston, all of the people were reportedly engaged, including the "trusted" driver. Most of the people apparently knew little of the details, but they did believe that their emancipation was at hand. The owner of the St. John's Parish plantation related that, from his knowledge of the means slaves used in "communicating intelligence from one plantation to another," he was convinced that "it was known throughout the neighborhood."[86]

The cause of failure cannot be placed on either the most exploited slaves who stood poised to move toward liberty or the urban laboring slaves who organized the rebellion but quickly defected. Most likely the bad judgment of Rolla Bennett who tried to recruit house servants and waiting men is largely responsible. This buffer group created by bondage was generally, though not always, composed of those who imbibed white culture and loyalty to white masters. Once again the wisdom of the black leadership was illustrated by the dictum of Peter Poyas, who warned leaders to be wary of those who worked in the house, particularly of those who wore the master's old clothes and ate the leavings from his table. Disclosures leading to the hanging of twenty-two men after the death of Gullah Jack came from urban slaves, which reveals the degree of disunion and distrust present among them. Significant also was perhaps a fear that they had rallied behind the wrong god and had trusted a fallible bastion of power. Living among whites as they did, urban slaves were between two cultures while isolated plantation slaves were able to keep more elements of the old one alive. Still, the Conspiracy was a supreme effort to break the chains of bondage in a spirit of nationalism, unity, and religious self-determination that would appeal to nearly all those of African heritage.

Testimony of informants gave credence to the magnitude, intensive planning, and geographical proximity of the conspiracy. The mainland country people to the south were under the command of Gullah Jack, the Island people around Charleston were led by Rolla Bennett, and those from the North by Ned Bennett. "I have spoken to Denmark and Peter about the people in the country," stated John Enslow, "and know they went into the country often and told me they had communications with all the islands—also in Columbia, Santee and different places in that direction." Estimates of numbers involved ranged from 600 to 9,000. Allowance must be made for exaggeration and for the leadership's persuasion tactics. Yet word of the intended insurrection or at least pending

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

emancipation could have spread in a variety of ways, aside from direct information from an insurgent. Large retinues of slaves traveled from urban to country residences especially in summer months. Black boatmen traveled the creeks, rivers, and Atlantic waters frequently, carrying produce, white people, cotton, and, most significant for slaves, the latest information about kith and kin. Many "trusted" slaves had liberty to travel and do business in their master's stead, as did Rolla, Governor Bennett's "trusted" slave.[87]

Thus a network of communication was established that funneled gossip, news, and even secrets throughout the surrounding plantations. Such a network could spread news of rebellion once the first blow was struck in Charleston. That summer of 1822 the Lowcountry slave quarters were buzzing with news from Charleston. But it was not news of rebellion and freedom. The day of freedom never came. Instead, word indicated that a reign of terror was in full force and the black leadership was swinging from ropes in the Charleston jail yard. As far south as Beaufort and the surrounding Islands, planters readied themselves for an uprising. Beaufort's town council went into secret session and doubled the armed night patrol. Later that year Beaufort authorities were alarmed by rumors that a slave insurrection was planned in their town. But these fears were apparently unfounded.

During the trials of the insurrectionists, the official report singled out the religious practices of blacks as a leading cause of the intended rebellion. According to the chief investigator:

> Religious fanaticism has not been without its effects on this project . . . the cession of a large body of blacks from the white Methodist Church formed a hot bed, in which the germ might be well expected to spring into life and vigor.[88]

Charleston clergymen of all denominations publicly alleged that blacks' recent religious practices were a major factor in spreading unrest. Respected Methodist minister Benjamin Elliott wrote a pamphlet deploring what he considered the exploitation of religion:

> This description of our population had been allowed to assemble for *religious* instruction.—The designing leaders in the scheme of villainy, availed themselves to these occasions to instill sentiments of ferocity, by *falsifying the Bible*. All the severe penal laws of the Israelites were quoted to mislead them, and the denunciations in the prophecies, which were intended to deter *men* from evil, were declared to be divine commands which they were to *execute*.[89]

17 the leadership it included anyone with a weapon, anyone "named" with a horse or means of obtaining one, those "named" who met at Bulkey's farm, or who had been in the company of those with weapons and powder. Many families were affected. None was allowed to mourn or to recover the bodies. The July 26 executions were the most horrendous. Twenty-two men were brought to the gallows with the entire city watching. At the execution ground confusion ensued and a slave boy-child was trampled to death by horses. Another boy, white, watched the hanging from the safety of a third floor window of his King Street home. Later he described the spectacle as "a sight calculated to strike terror in the heart of every slave." It was a cold-blooded warning to would-be insurrectionists. But the death agony in the black community continued. On July 30, six more were executed. Additional men were thusly sentenced, but the stench of death began to sicken even white vengeance and these last thirty-six slaves were banished. The final victim to die for attempting to raise the insurrection was on August 2 when one William Garner was caught in Columbia where he had fled following the arrests.[93] It was a reminder of the power of the state and tenacity of slavery. Black leadership had fallen. The black Methodist church was destroyed. And in the eyes of many, African spiritualism had failed the test of service and invincibility against white might and white religion.

175 Despite apparent failings, many slaves were still tied to old ways, although drawn to the dominant religion as well. In both systems of belief they envisioned a means of attaining their heart's desire—liberty. But the immediate reality indicated that most whites were no more prepared to view Lowcountry slaves as spiritual siblings than as political equals. Yet at this time slaves may have decided that freedom would not come by the sword. The chances were too slim, the risks too many, and the price too dear. Much of the Old Testament militancy faded among the slaves familiar with its tenets. For the majority, who perhaps didn't fully grasp the association, it was not difficult to incorporate into their spiritualism a New Testament ideology which prophesied equality for all and the dignity of the sufferer. New Testament tenets became for them one banner under which to pursue their continued vision of freedom.

The Vesey Conspiracy prompted a lengthy debate and for a number of years afterward the subject of religious education was controversial in South Carolina. Most slave masters in the Lowcountry grew more adamant than ever in resisting Christian instruction of slaves. But among

●175 "thinking men" the belief emerged that a religious relationship between master and slave would have greater police power than statute. Two issued loomed in the minds of concerned South Carolinians. First, whites pondered the "falsification" of scriptures by the insurrectionists. Second, many slaves adhered to a spiritual tradition outside of white purview and capable of calling forth the instincts of freedom to a point of open rebellion. Governor Thomas Bennett, whose most trusted slaves were leaders in the attempted insurrection, lamented to Baptist pastor Richard Furman of Charleston that the projected insurrection had produced a backlash against the religious teaching of slaves. He urged that "humanity and religion" be advocated and laudably employed. According to Bennett, the Old and New Testament presented evidence of "Slaves and their Masters enjoying Membership together in the same Christian Church." As for the "religious" character of the "nefarious scheme," Bennett believed the scriptures were perverted by the insurrectionists. He observed that none of the "religious Negroes" in regular white churches were drawn into the plot because the conspirators were afraid to trust them. Bennett insisted that "religious Negroes" should not be punished for what others had done. Such Negroes were a safeguard to Southern society:

> We have Reasons to believe they have a good Influence on the State of Society by the Promotion of good Morale as well as Piety among that class of People. This circumstance corroborates a Sentiment which has been long entertained by some who have been careful in making observations, as well as in informing on this subject . . . one of the best securities we have to the domestic Peace and Safety of the State is found in the Sentiments and corresponding Dispositions of the religious Negroes.[9]

Others felt moved to address the issue. In 1822, Richard Furman, representing the Baptist Convention of South Carolina, communicated to the new governor the expressed "official" views of the Baptists. South Carolina Baptist ministers reaffirmed the lawfulness of holding slaves. Some of them owned hundreds. Using scripture as evidence, Furman maintained, as had Bennett, that slaves belonging to regular white churches did not participate in the Vesey Conspiracy. He further admitted that Christian teaching among the slaves had been almost totally ignored. In that respect Furman recognized that masters had not done their "duty." Speaking for the Convention, he stated:

175

> The interest and security of the State would be promoted, by allowing, under proper regulations, considerable religious privileges, to such of this class, as to know how to estimate them aright, and have given suitable evidence of their own good principles, uprightness and fidelity; by attaching them to principles of gratitude and love, to the interests of their masters and the State; and thus rendering their fidelity firm and constant.[97]

While Furman himself believed in a more active policy of religious instruction, the Baptists' statement was almost pure rhetoric. Baptists remained little concerned with religious instruction before or for some years after Vesey's Conspiracy. Wealthy coastal and Sea Island planters (nearly all Baptists and Episcopalians) viewed the attempted insurrection as an eerie vindication of their long-standing resistance to Christianizing slaves. In the midst of a large African slave population, they were the most vulnerable in case of an uprising. Still, every denomination was drawn into posturing on the conspiracy where religion and rebellion had been given the same meaning. The times stimulated much thought that would eventually lead to some implementation. Yet immediate reaction was not favorable to a liberal attitude. For whites the social trauma was too real. For blacks it was a time of anger and disappointment mixed with an overriding fear. Slaves were hanged for crimes that had previously brought lashes. Slaves set fires. In Georgetown in 1829 a conspiracy was discovered. Several slaves were hanged and the Lowcountry once again put on the alert. In Savannah and Augusta, disastrous fires prompted the Georgia governor to prepare a defense against slave revolt. In other states similar unrest occurred during this period. But Lowcountry slaves were particularly restless. The Southern situation was exacerbated by an incendiary document written by a black man from the North in 1829 and probably smuggled into South Carolina by black seamen. David Walker relied heavily on Christianity in his appeal to fellow blacks to take up arms against white masters. In the wake of these activities, the infrequent custom of teaching slaves to read was banned by statute. Runaway slaves robbed the mails and attacked travelers more than ever. Religious instruction, where it previously existed became unpopular. Slave meetings were disbanded and missionaries cut off from plantations. Masters previously indifferent became openly hostile to religious instruction. The few who once favored slave literacy disavowed it. The debate continued. But religious activity among the masses of slaves was, for a time, a closed issue in the South Carolina Lowcountry.[98]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 A spiritual revival occurred in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Societies were organized for spreading the gospel at home and abroad. In the South, before the Vesey Conspiracy, an impulse was given to religion mainly by Methodists, which awakened some to the "spiritual needs" of the black population. White churches began building galleries to allow for accommodation of free blacks and favorite or acculturated slaves. Eventually this limited exposure to Christianity would filter down to the masses of field slaves. But Vesey's Conspiracy and other factors delayed that. Even so, early nineteenth-century "revivalism" was mainly directed toward whites in newly settled regions, Indians, and missionary efforts abroad. By 1830 only a small minority of slaves regularly attended a church or heard a sermon. In the words of one slaveholding clergyman turned historian, "taking them as a class, their religious instruction was extensively and most seriously ignored."[97]

Still, some evinced concern and the issue began the "war of pens." A few planters and small number of statesmen felt the sting of abolitionist accusations and a gnawing contradiction as they piously embraced the evangelism of the 1830s and 1840s. The issue continued to breed anxiety. Most large planters deeply feared and distrusted the effects of Christianity on the servile population. It was a sore spot with the South Carolina clergy as well. Those who took their religion seriously were troubled by the dichotomy of the South. And even in South Carolina, though smarting from accusations, no denomination took their religion more seriously than the Methodists.

CHAPTER 6

6

"Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantation Missions and Methodist Impact

000

> But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency. . . .*

> In slabery, nigger go to white folks chu'ch. Slabe don't know nutting 'bout baptizing. W'en nigger dead, you can't knock off wuk for berry um. You berry um by de light ob torch. . . . Dey wasn't no nigger preacher on de plantation but dey been people to hold praise. (prayers).**

The Movement

175 The South Carolina Methodist hierarchy was apparently stimulated into action as a result of the Denmark Vesey Conspiracy and other events. Methodists came to view religious instruction of slaves as their particular calling. The mission was designed to Christianize the slaves on the one hand, and on the other, to demonstrate that Christianity would not foment rebellion or threaten the public peace. Rather than a two-edged

---

*James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 314–15. 113

**Sam Polite, former slave, in George P. Rawick, ed. *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols. *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 Parts, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), III: (3)274.

[p. 167]

•175 sword, or a weapon of resistance, Methodists believed Christianity could, if "properly" taught, be the best insurance against insurrection. As far as Lowcountry slaves were concerned, the religion and some of those who brought it, had certain redeeming qualities. Selectivity was practiced on both sides. The Methodist hierarchy carefully chose biblical literature they believed suitable for slaves. And the Gullahs decided which features of the Christian doctrines could be serviceable to them.

Southern contemplation of the fears and horrors of slave insurrection and the pros and cons of slave conversion continued during the decade that had brought Denmark Vesey's Conspiracy. The Northern religious community grew more and more vociferous in denouncing the lack of Christianization efforts among bondspeople. At a time when American missionaries were "spreading the gospel" to American Indians, Africans, Asians, and Polynesians, some noticed that no such energies were spent on the African-Americans. In 1826 a leading Presbyterian journal, the *Christian Advocate*, published a query regarding the state of religious instruction among the slaves. Aiming at the Southern clergy, the writer asked:

> Are there not 2,000,000 slaves in the republic of the United States?
> Are not almost the whole of them denied the Word of God?
> Are they not in full view of the American church, and yet in a great measure overlooked by that Church?
> Is there any reason why they should be disregarded, especially while Greeks are remembered, and distant heathens commiserated?

The inquirer concluded that "It would doubtless be a work of mercy and relief to many who may have a conscience not justly enlightened, to furnish such fair and true answers to these questions, as would take away groundless apprehension that 'all is not right' in our own church and country."[1]

A Southern minister sent a prompt reply substantiating the validity of the criticism:

> Should it be asked, "are not the greater part of them [the slaves] ignorant of the Word of God?" I should reply in the affirmative. Should it be again asked, "Are not many of them 'denied' the Word of God?" I should reply, yes. . . . Some slaves are, by their wicked owners, absolutely forbidden to use the Word of God. . . . Many slaves, owned by masters professedly Christians, are so neglected by them, as regards their spiritual interests, that they live and die in utter ignorance of the Word of God.[2]

Others expressed similar concerns. That same year the *Wesleyan Journal* published an article signed "Philander" which discussed the excuses offered for this "neglect" of "duty" in regard to the slaves. Some said slaves were "too ignorant" to understand doctrine and "too perverse" to regularly attend to matters of religion. Others, stated "Philander," insisted that masters would not allow Christian instruction of their slaves. Yet according to the writer, the "most significant culprit" was the Church, in this case Methodist. As "Philander" viewed the situation, the Church refused to broach the issue because it was unpopular. Thus the Methodist church was not fulfilling its duty as overseer of the spiritual welfare of the humanity within its own presence. "Philander" was followed by a letter of support from "Philemon," probably a slaveholder given the biblical reference of the name. "Philemon" suggested that the Methodist church "get on with the business." Christian instruction, he believed, would be a boon to *masters* and could be carried out effectively by the itinerant ministry.[3]

South Carolina Methodists have been credited with leading the slave states in motivating interest in Christian instruction among planters and other denominations. Certainly Methodists began discussion of the subject through the *Wesleyan Journal*, edited by William Capers, who became superintendant of the plantation missions. But the first major statement came in 1829 when Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, noted statesman and slaveholder, addressed the Agricultural Society of South Carolina. Pinckney had recently solicited the services of a Methodist missionary for his own plantations, and believed in the benefits to be derived from Christian conversion of bondspeople. His address skillfully approached the issue by disarming his listeners with an introductory defense of slavery. Settling fellow slaveholders at ease, Pinckney extolled them for concern with their slaves' physical well-being, juxtaposing the "happy" bondspeople with the "beleagured" laboring poor in Europe and the North. He further attempted to assure the audience of his proslavery commitment, defending the system from biblical example and citing passages well known to most upholders of the institution. Finally, satisfied with his own persuasive maneuvers, the statesman held forth on the business at hand, still cautiously speaking from the planters' position:

> Nothing is better calculated to render man satisfied with his destiny in this world, than a conviction that its hardships and trials are as transitory as its honors and enjoyments; and that good conduct, founded on Christian principles, will ensure

> • 175 superior rewards in that which is future and eternal. A firm persuasion that it is both our interest and duty to afford religious instruction to the blacks, induces me to dwell on this subject.[4]

Many meritorious qualities existed in a Christian servile people as opposed to the "heathen" one that lived among them, Pinckney assured Society members. Christianity would elevate black behavior from its "deplorable state," and such amelioration was an asset to the planter. Pinckney held that black children learned from parents and elders mischievous tendencies that were counterproductive to plantation interests. From "his natural instructors," Pinckney related, the "little negro is often taught . . . that he may commit any vice he can conceal from his superiors; and thus falsehood and deception are among the earliest they imbibe." But if "true religion" were propagated, a sense of duty would undermine the slaves' reluctance to labor and,

> diminishing the cases of feigned sickness so harassing the planter, would augment their numerical force and consequent production. . . . A greater proportion of domestic happiness would prevail, and render them contented with their situation, and more anxious to promote their owner's welfare. The absence, or diminution of theft, falsehood, and many other vices, would render the home of the Agriculturalist far more agreeable than it can be where guilt, which escapes human detection, knows not and fears not another tribunal.[5]

To those objecting to Christian instruction on grounds that it was "the cloak assumed to cover the nefarious designs of insurrection," Pinckney countered that such instruction would be "the best antidote to this very disease." He maintained that no arguments were entitled to so little weight as those condemning slave exposure to Protestantism because it was abused by some. So long as planters exercised their right of scrutiny and control over who taught slaves and kept a watchful eye on the content of the doctrines disseminated, Christian teaching would not lend itself to insurrection. The appeal was to group interest. To "ensure the security and comfort of the planter" slaves should be made "conscious of their advantages, and grateful to their Maker for his bounties." To accomplish this an efficient system of Christianizing was needed, especially in the country region, and every Protestant denomination stood ready and willing to send missionaries where plantation owners would permit it. These "white and Southern" missionaries Pinckney insisted, would only instruct slaves "orally" in the duties and principles of Christianity. "Such a state of moral culture," persuaded Pinckney, "would give us the advantage in argument over those of our Northern Brethren . . . whose objection to our system is partly founded on the deficiency of religious instruction." If said instruction and subsequent conversion were "more genuinely diffused," Pinckney assured, "our national character would be relieved from its only real opprobrium."[6] 175

C. C. Pinckney's address before the South Carolina Agricultural Society typified the concern of a few planters to make the masses of bondspeople culturally visible for the first time. While reminding slaveholders of their duty to provide spiritual and religious instruction to their slaves, his overriding argument in favor of Christianizing efforts centered on protection of the institution and a countermeasure support system against the influence of leadership in the slave quarters. Christianity, with its concepts of sin and rebirth, could conceivably contribute to the bondspeople's developing a sense of vulnerability and prostration. So long as slaves remained a somewhat foreign and even mysterious mass of laborers, outside the realm of human interest on the part of whites, such slaves were a threat. As Christians however, sharing the same beliefs and spiritual orientation as their masters, blacks would eventually come to feel part of the total society. To imbibe white religion as taught by the new wave of missionaries would, in the mind of Pinckney and others, allow slaves to accept their subservient role in society, making them not only physical dependents but spiritual and psychological dependents as well.

Pinckney's call for bringing Christianity to the slaves was a significant departure, coming as it did from a wealthy, highly recognized planter and politician. This was the first time a large group of South Carolina planters were addressed on the subject by an individual whose respectability was national and whose interests coincided directly with their own. Pinckney's method of approaching the issue was employed by others later. He saw the result of Christian conversion primarily in idyllic terms—happy, docile, "spiritually uplifted" darkies, and a peaceful plantation, free from theft, runaways, and bereft of artful means to avoid labor. The appeal also liberated the slaveholders from a sense of guilt—if they happened to have one—regarding their right to hold slaves. Pinckney reasoned that the doctrines of the Old as well as New Testaments upheld slavery and that scriptures, "if properly taught," would never undermine the slave system. Naturally, the best way to ensure "proper" instruction was to have "Southern men with Southern principles" as teachers. Fi- 17 around the time of Vesey's Conspiracy, most were slaves. But the upcountry, frequented by circuit riders and stimulated by numerous revivals, contained the majority of the state's 18,460 black Methodists at the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century. Thus the coastal plantations, especially in the Sea Islands, were the main target areas during the thirty years of Methodist religious efforts among the bondspeople of South Carolina, and parts of Georgia.[10] 17 (997)

175 When the South Carolina Methodist Conference met in February 1830, its Missionary Society produced a stirring report entitled "The Southern Slave Population." Authored by James O. Andrew, a slaveholding bishop from Augusta, Georgia, the document noted the lack of missionary service to slaves and lauded the attention and encouragement given by C. C. Pinckney. More significantly, the report indicated a rising concern within the Southern Methodist church. In 1831 Andrew's report was published in the national Methodist journal, indicating that a movement was under way in the regional jurisdiction of the South Carolina Conference. Bishop Andrew acknowledged that in the face of "so many obstacles," a long period of negligence had characterized Methodist attitude. Yet he insisted that the Methodist church was not unmindful of the so-called irreligion of the slaves:

> We saw the efforts made to send the Gospel to distant Pagans, and we heard of the success of those efforts with much gratification. But when, in sight of our own doors, there were thousands of immortal beings, the slaves of a superstition as degrading, and an idolatry as dark as . . . the Pagans of savage lands; and when we observed that comparatively little was doing to guide them to purity and to God, we have blushed for our own inconsistency, and longed to see put into operation such an instrumentality as should extensively and successfully, carry the Gospel to the large and increasing slave population.[11]

The difficulties and magnitude of the undertaking had until recently hindered the Church's commitment Andrew reported. But a new day was dawning. Of late, the Church was "cheered and strengthened" and much gratified by the expressed advocacy of the renowned C. C. Pinckney. The South Carolina Conference considered the words of so "notable and respected" a Carolinian to be a "valuable and powerful auxiliary" in the work undertaken. Speaking on behalf of the Methodists' missionary branch, the slaveholding bishop reiterated even more strongly themes pounded out by Pinckney: the "moral baseness" of un-Christian slaves had to be combated. Among bondspeople, stated Andrew, "the tender and hallowed ties of husband and wife are unknown," and the slaves' "love of strong drink" and "immoral spirit" was a detriment to the economic interests of the planter and tranquility of the plantation. In comparing these "vices" to the "virtues" of the "Christian Negro," Andrew noted:

> The *Christian Negro looks to heaven*. He feels that this world is but a temporary home, and although his condition here may be a hard one, yet God can sanctify every hardship to an abundant increase of his spiritual comfort. He serves his master from *principle* not from *fear*. It is a service rendered to God; and he regards his master's interests as his own. They are therefore safe in his hands.[12]

The relationship between Christian instruction and socioeconomic control was not peculiar to "enlightened" elements of the South. British employers and Methodist clergy resorted to a similar analysis during the Industrial Revolution, which coincided with the period of American Methodist activity among the slaves. Some of the parallels are noteworthy. The values of a doctrine of submission with a spiritual base had its uses for both American slaveholders and British employers. British antislavery Methodists and reformers did not allow this "progressive" cause to interfere with the "demands" of a free market economy. Religion taught to slaves in the South, like that British laborers were encouraged to accept, reinforced the "blessedness of poverty," or the dignity of being a good slave. Both policies were viewed as essential for discipline to the machine in the case of England and to the fields in the case of the United States. Yet this "godliness" brought no temporal gain to the laborers. Thus E. P. Thompson, in writing about British workers, noted that the "first great lesson" taught to laborers was that their primary happiness was not in the present world, but in a future one. Labor then, was a "*pure act of virtue*," according to British pro-Methodist ideologues of the nineteenth century. It was "inspired by the love of a transcendent Being, operating . . . on our will and affections." The *Power of the Cross* transformed the will, created a hatred of *sin* and love of *good*, as interpreted by employer and slavemaster through their missionary agents. The *Power of the Cross* was sacrificial. Sacrifice would remove the guilt of *sin*. The words of Dr. Andrew Ure from his *Philosophy of Manufactures* illustrate the functional use of religion as a means of work discipline. While specifically referring to British laborers, the analogy is comparable to the slaves. Ure maintained that the "transforming power" of the Cross was:

> the motive which removes love of sin; it mortifies sin by showing its turpitude to be indelible except by such an awful expiration: it atones for disobedience; it excites to obedience; it purchases strength for obedience; it makes obedience practicable; it makes it acceptable; it makes it in a manner unavoidable, for it constrains to it; it is, finally, not only the motive to obedience, but the pattern of it.[13]

Still the Methodists boasted of spiritual egalitarianism rather than the elitism so traditional among Calvinist-oriented and Anglican sects in the United States and England. Methodism beckoned all. The elect could be legion if willing totally to prostrate themselves before the Cross. The South Carolina Methodist church declared itself ready to include the African-Americans on the Lowcountry plantations into their connection. Andrew concluded his address by calling for missionaries of a special caliber, particularly designated for such a work, and capable of feeling themselves charged with the slaves' spiritual interests. They must be men whom the bondspeople were willing to regard as "*their preachers*" but also men to whom slaveholders would look upon confidently, as the *appropriate* spiritual guides of their slaves. The appeal was moving and dramatic:

> Here is a work which will require piety, prudence, patience in no ordinary measure. He who would enter upon it efficiently, must be willing to feel himself in a good degree an exile from the pleasures of society. He must be willing to be looked down upon by the rich and great about him as a *negro preacher*. He must be content to take up his abode amidst fogs and death, and *trust God* emphatically. . . .
>
> Methinks we hear a goodly number starting from the different departments of the Church, and saying *we* are willing to sit down by the negro's cabin fire, and talk to him of Jesus and the resurrection and death; and take God as our portion and heaven as our final home. . . . Then we say to the Church, up quickly and send these men to their work.[14]

Impressive claims to apostolic fervor had their place in motivating the Methodist Church to Christianize the slaves in South Carolina. Yet the Methodists did not initiate the movement even though as early as 1824 they expressed a desire to create "a separate department" to address the slaves' "spiritual welfare." Lack of enthusiasm closed the issue until 1828. At that time two Lowcountry planters, Colonel Lewis Morris and Charles Baring of the Combahee region, asked Methodist circuit rider, George W. Moore, to give special religious instruction to their slaves. Morris and Baring were so pleased with the outcome that they determined to

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175 petition the South Carolina Conference, scheduled to meet early the following year, to send regular missionaries to their plantations. At the same time, but perhaps not independent of the former developments, C. C. Pinckney called on William Capers, Presiding Elder of the Charleston District, and asked him to recommend a "suitable exhorter" to oversee his plantations on the Santee River. Pinckney related that one of his Georgia friends employed a Methodist overseer, and was very happy with the "new piety" among the slaves and with the increase in plantation productivity. The Georgia planter credited these developments to his overseer's influence over the slaves. Capers informed Pinckney that he could not assist him in employing a Methodist minister as an overseer, but added that a full-time religious instructor could be provided by the South Carolina Conference upon application. Pinckney agreed to apply, and the South Carolina Conference of 1829 was historic. The Morris, Baring, and Pinckney requests were acted upon immediately, and the Conference sent out the first missionaries devoted exclusively to Lowcountry slaves. With the movement launched, a statement was appropriate. Pinckney's address favoring slave conversion came in August 1829. The Methodists began religious instruction in 1828. But no statement on the issue was forthcoming from the South Carolina Conference until February 1830. Thus Pinckney's approbation preceded the South Carolina Methodists' appeal, perhaps as a means of cushioning opposition and suspicion. In any case, the role of the Methodist church in initiating religious instruction among the slaves in South Carolina was not as bold a venture as some previous writers on the subject have stated.[15]

The Christian conversion movement, then, originated with an appeal from planters. After that initial step the Methodist church in South Carolina pledged active support and leadership. Possibly national pressure from the General Conference would have eventually forced the Southern clergy into action. Once the state hierarchy organized their missions to the slaves, the process was conducted with diligence and vigor. But as of 1829, no pressure from the national episcopacy induced such a movement, and the urgency which South Carolina Methodists expressed could easily have been prompted by the financial support from "concerned" planters. Furthermore, the source of South Carolina Methodist zeal for slave conversion was not found in the Church hierarchy. Most enthusiasm as well as commitment derived from the lay preachers, men of humble birth, for the most part non-slaveholders, sent among bondspeople

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

in the isolated, unhealthy Lowcountry and Sea Island regions. Some of 175• them were buried there. One wonders how long the question of slave conversion would have lain dormant except for the efforts intended to stabilize the plantation system. This primary goal, seasoned perhaps with some element of conscience, caused a few influential slaveholders to promote the experiment. A definite parallel existed between spiritual and temporal interests. And the view that Christianization would lead to a more efficient and submissive labor force slowly gained credibility.

Despite postulations about Methodist involvement in Vesey's Conspiracy, Southern Methodists were not antislavery, and Lowcountry planters had little real reason to suspect them as harbingers of black liberation. By their own admission they were a denomination whose Southern branch believed in slavery. The South Carolina Conference's reaction to the Vesey Conspiracy was to reaffirm their proslavery position. Andrew, in his 1830 report, stated that the church's responsibility was not to contemplate slavery as an institution. Such speculations, according to Andrew, brought much "evil" to the slaves without any corresponding benefits. "We look upon the blacks just as we find them," he wrote, ". . . hoping only to bring them into the enjoyment of freedom of a higher character; freedom from the bondage of Satan, from the control of passions and lusts."[16]

Yet such statements, undoubtedly sincere, could not immediately dispel suspicion and doubt. The burgeoning abolitionist movement, and the fact that some Northerners were already going south to do what Southern clergymen had heretofore left undone, made the task of the South Carolina Methodists even more difficult. Antislavery sentiment gained momentum among Methodists and other denominations in the North. Anxiety about the abolitionists disguised as "men of the cloth" going among slaves made any missionary a suspect until proven otherwise. One 175 Sea Island missionary in the employment of the South Carolina Confer- 797 ence complained to the Missionary Society:

> My success in getting access to the colored people, as far as I flattered myself in the early part of the year, has been in some measure obstructed, growing out of the excitement got up by the abolitionists.[17]

Sea Island and Lowcountry planters were surrounded by a dense black population as compared to a paucity of whites. White communities felt particularly vulnerable. A Northern Presbyterian minister, Courtlandt

● 175 797 Van Renssalaer, was forced out of Virginia as a missionary among the slaves. He then attempted to preach to the neglected bondspeople of the Sea Island and Savannah River regions in 1835 and 1836. His career was abruptly halted when a circular appeared stating that a gentleman of "high respectability" had information that Van Renssalaer held secret meetings with slaves, "and consulted with them on their means of revolt, their armies . . . when they expected to be ready. . . ." The "authorities" were alerted, and "Van Renssalaer would have been arrested but when sought for he had suddenly left." The missionary denied the charges from his Northern sanctuary and indicated they exemplified the opposition to the "work" which he and others endeavored to accomplish among the slaves.[18]

175 Allegations about antislavery activity being conducted by Northern missionaries, a distrust of so novel an experiment, and a traditional association of religion with rebellion evoked open hostility to Christian instruction in many cases. The idea of perfect strangers going among their "people" to preach was not one to which planters could easily adjust. The South Carolina Conference proclaimed repeatedly the official Methodist position on slavery: that it was an institution of "Divine Providence," that the issue of slavery did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Church but was "exclusively appropriate to the civil authorities," and that the Conference was resolved "not to intermeddle with it." Representing the South Carolina Conference in 1838, William Capers, Superintendent of the Missions to the Slaves, further affirmed the Methodist belief that "the Holy Scriptures . . . do unequivocally authorize the relation of master and slave." Capers, himself a slaveholder, affirmed:

> Our missionaries inculcate the duties of servants to their masters, as we find these duties stated in the Scriptures. . . . We hold that a Christian slave must be submissive, faithful and obedient . . . we would employ no one in the work who might hesitate to teach this; nor can such a one be found in the whole number of preachers in this Conference.[19]

[797 In spite of such reassurances, skepticism among slaveholders continued and invitations to instruct Sea Island and Lowcountry slaves constituted a mere trickle in the 1830s. In a letter to William Capers, C. C. Pinckney expressed his own gratitude for the services of the Methodists. But he also stated that the majority of the seaboard planters were "still adverse to missionary efforts and give us ample cause to pray that their

eyes may be opened." Nevertheless, missionaries increased their efforts 175 •
yearly and other denominations applauded the undertaking. In 1838 an
interdenominational group of influential clergymen met under the auspices
of the Methodist Missionary Society and asserted their growing
concern and commitment to slave conversion. They agreed that areas of
the large cotton and rice plantations along the sea coast from the Savannah
to the Pee Dee rivers in Georgia and South Carolina would receive
the bulk of attention. In most of the state, churches existed in nearly
every area, but the group admitted that even there, accommodations for
blacks were insufficient. However, at least no one could say, "Negroes 175
of the neighborhood are without the gospel." Such was not the case "on 797
the Sea Islands, and in the delta of the rivers, where the Negroes are
most numerous." These thousands had no churches accessible to them,
and the interdenominational group confessed, "they are as destitute as if
they were not inhabitants of a Christian land." The plantation missions
were undertaken for the benefit of these slaves.[20]

Southern churches and seminaries were not long in taking note of the 175
movement. Episcopalians and Presbyterians, as well as Methodists
preached sermons on the benefits of the enterprise. Gradually, some
planters, convinced of the desirability of Christian instruction, publicly
declared their approval at agricultural meetings and in agricultural journals.
Denominational newspapers also kept up arguments in favor of religious
instruction. William Capers prepared a short catechism for the
missionaries' use in instructing slaves. Arguments of appeal rarely varied.
Although the interest of the plantation was preemptory, the security
of the country and saving of black souls were also loudly proclaimed.
The 1830s was a period of persuasion and promotion of Christian proselytizing,
with the Methodist church directing the campaign and receiving
widespread if not unified support from a number of quarters. In the
words of one church association spokesman, discussing conditions in South
Carolina and Georgia during this period, "The religious instruction of
our slave population, entirely suspended in some parts of the country,
through the lamentable interference of abolition fanatics, has proceeded
with almost unabated diligence and steadiness of purpose."[21]

In the Sea Island region south of Charleston, Methodist missionaries 175
acquired early access to some plantations. Two missionaries, George W. 797
Moore and Thomas D. Turpin, arrived in 1833. Moore's appointment 567
included Beaufort and the surrounding islands. His first charge consisted

175 of two plantations and two preaching appointments in Beaufort (attended
797 by slaves from several plantations), six plantations on Paris Island, and
one plantation on each of the five remaining islands around Beaufort.
567 Turpin's appointment in the Beaufort District, called the May and New River Mission, included Hilton Head, Bull's and Dawfuskie Islands, and the mainland between the May and New Rivers.[22]

The most successful method of gaining permission to evangelize slaves involved having a sympathetic local planter approach fellow slaveholders on behalf of the missionaries. In the Sea Islands Methodists were actively supported by William E. Baynard. The Baynard family were large slaveholders with plantation interests on Hilton Head and Edisto Islands as well as on the mainland. Baynard was a frequent intermediary between planters and missionaries. Writing to him in 1833, one Hilton Head planter expressed his confidence in the cause:

> I am anxious that the mission to the colored people in this community be continued . . . that the gospel should be preached to them in their cabins and the Scriptures explained in such a plain and simple manner that they may fully understand what true religion is.[23]

Baynard was not always so successful. While some slaveholders simply refused to allow missionaries on their plantations, others gave the experiment a try but found "results" discouraging. For example, William Pope, Sr., Baptist patriarch of a Sea Island family who owned the largest amount of aggregate acreage on St. Helena, Dawfuskie, and Hilton Head, answered Baynard's inquiry of 1834 in the negative. Pope felt that Thomas Turpin, sent the previous year, had gained few converts. He wrote:

> If I am not deceived one or two of them [the slaves] will long remember him with gratitude . . . but am inclined to think he has not met with decided success . . . he has had to encounter some difficulty, discouragements and prejudices which he has not been able to fully overcome—tho' he has certainly laboured faithfully, and been zealous and diligent in the discharge of his duty.

Pope concluded his letter by stating that the missionary's services would be discontinued since the "means and opportunities" of religious instruction had improved; there were "now two churches on this Island [Hilton Head] in which there is service at least twice a month."[24]

There appeared to be a consensus among certain planters in the May and New River Mission to withhold cooperation from Turpin and the Methodists. James Sealy, also a planter on Hilton Head Island, wrote to

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Baynard in a letter dated the same day as Pope's. Sealy expressed hope 175
that "the people" had profited from the missionary's presence, but he 797
"could see nothing of it." Sealy, like Pope, withheld consent for the 567
missionary's coming within the confines of his plantation.[25] Denominational rivalry may have been a factor in decisions to deny Methodists access to the slaves, and Baptists expressed the most skepticism toward missionaries. But more significantly, the Methodist-Baptist controversy provides insight into religious activity among the slaves prior to the missionaries' coming.

Thomas Turpin, assigned to the May and New River Mission in 1833, had his own opinions about the state of religion in the Sea Islands, and defended himself regarding his unsuccessful efforts among the bondspeople. Turpin had access to about 1,000 adult slaves, one third of whom were in the Baptist church and in the "Negro societies, and all of them under Baptist influence." Yet these slaves rarely saw the pastor of the church or attended its services. Instead, Turpin related, the slaves had "societies organized among themselves." According to the missionary,
"these societies were very corrupt." Turpin described a scene at one black
society gathering on Bull's Island in which a particular type of penance, [681]
drawn from African traditions, was engaged in as punishment for sin: [673

> They had three degrees of punishment, and . . . the punishment was inflicted agreeably to the magnitude of the crime, according to their view of the crime. If the crime was of the first magnitude, the perpetrator had to pick up a quart of benne seed . . . poured on the ground by the priest; and if of the second, a quart of rice; and if of the third a quart of corn; . . . they also had high seats and low seats, but incorrect views relative to those who ought to be punished; . . . it was also a rule among them never to divulge the secret of stealing: and if it should be divulged . . . that one had to go on the low seat or pick up the benne seed.[26]

The rite the slaves engaged in is remiscent of high-low seats and a 17
pyramid of degrees in the Poro and Sande in Upper Guinea, and some 681
secret societies in Angola. The Poro inner circle was a social regulating
as well as religious body. It stopped quarrels, caught, tried, condemned, 567
and punished social criminals. In Poro-Sande culture, high seats be- 797
longed to a few old religious leaders of high degree.[27] But the way Gul- 673
lahs employed the use of high-low degrees was unique and reflected their ability to adapt a past tradition to the organization of their slave community. The association of the communal and the spiritual is evident,

● 175 church at will, and randomly sat in on conferences or any other meetings the blacks held. Nor could black ministers preach or officiate at the church without the endorsement of at least two white Baptist ministers. Thus, the black church was separate physically but dependent upon white favor for its existence. Turpin's critics reminded him that Marshall was "nothing more than a Negro," implying that the black minister need not be taken seriously. Turpin disagreed. Marshall may be a "Negro," said the Methodist, but one authorized to baptize and preach, "and he has baptized a great many many in this low country." Slaves in the May and New River area were among Marshall's converts, but Turpin said, "he never comes to see them . . . nor any other Baptist minister." Therefore, as far as the Methodist missionary was concerned, his observations were grounded in the fact that slaves in the Sea Island region were practicing "corrupt," "superstitious" rites under a rubric of Christianity.[30]

Membership in Andrew Marshall's Savannah Church was for these slaves a contact with Christianity, perhaps the only contact. It provided them with a sanctuary for continuance of spiritual independence, though, like the ill-fated African Church of Charleston, probably serving a number of roles for various groups of African-Americans. By joining the church Gullahs became nominal Christians yet practiced religion relatively free from scrutiny. Church attendance was not an every Sunday occurrence even for white Baptists, who might attend once a month. Turpin believed the slaves had no contact with the Savannah Church, yet they must have had some. But undoubtedly most slaves who could join did so because it was an African-American spiritual organization as well as a Christian church. Membership would also hopefully keep the Methodists away. Planters *and* slaves probably wanted this at first, although for different reasons.

The Turpin report exemplifies the Gullahs' own method of putting the new religion to use. The "discouragements and prejudices" he encountered were not as much a *preference* for Baptist worship, as implied by slaveholder Pope's letter. Certainly elements of Baptist practices appealed to the slaves, just as elements of the missionaries' "method" did not. Methodism took a more persistent attitude toward its converts and its doctrines. Conversion was a serious solemn matter. Doctrine had to be memorized, and scriptures were lectured on and discussed extensively by the missionary. Preaching among the slaves was more didactic than inspiring, and "true" believers had to demonstrate a reasonable understanding and acceptance of Christian teaching as presented before they became church members. Furthermore, during this early period, Methodist religious instruction among the Gullahs was entirely conducted by whites, and caused problems for a slave population unaccustomed to seeing any whites except slave masters and overseers. Gullahs did not readily adapt to Methodist concentration on learning and reciting church discipline. They were even more resistant to efforts to shift spiritual leadership out of the slave quarters and from black to white influence.

Most Gullahs wanted to to construct their own socioreligious system and not without its "Christian" elements. Few were actually affiliated with any Baptist churches during this period as compared to later. But for those who were, religious activities through association with a church acceptable to slaveholders facilitated approval of the slaves' own independent "Negro Societies." These societies were reportedly organized by the slaves themselves. As long-distance Baptists, Gullahs deviated from little-understood orthodox practices without being closely observed.

The straightforward, illuminating approach detailed in Turpin's report provides insight into the religious practices he found among the Gullahs. But his "Missionary Sketch" further increased Methodist unpopularity with planters. Nor apparently was it favorably received by the South Carolina Missionary Society, since Turpin was removed in midyear, following circulation of the report, and a circuit rider from the Orangeburg area sent to replace him. Furthermore, subsequent missionary reports never assumed the pointedness and frankness which characterized Turpin's statements in 1833. During the remainder of the period of Christian conversion in South Carolina, vivid descriptions of "superstitions" encountered by the missionaries no longer found a place in public print. Yet there were undoubtedly many. One missionary suggested that preachers write down the nature of these slave beliefs in order to provide a history of the Methodist plantation movement. Evidently nothing came of this effort. Missionary reports were first carried by the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, a widely read Methodist newspaper published in New York. By 1837, the growing schism between Northern and Southern Methodists led to the founding of the *Southern Christian Advocate* published in Charleston. But Northern religious presses, also interested in the progress of slave conversion, often published the missionary reports even after the New York based newspaper was superseded in the South.[31]

175 The South Carolina Conference wanted favorable, optimistic reports. In their efforts to absolve the Southern Church from Northern reproach, Methodists expected missionaries to cease concentrating on the nature of "superstitions" among the slaves, on "moral degradation," or sect rivalry. Such emphasis suggested that the enterprise was not successful. Also to focus on planter impropriety undermined the confidence the Methodist church hoped to instill among the slaveholding class. Perhaps as a result of Turpin's unpopular "Missionary Sketch," late in 1833 William Capers published a notice to missionaries stating that the sort of information then being received was unsatisfactory. "General remarks," wrote Capers, "by no means furnish the requisite information." The Superintendent of Missions instructed each missionary to provide a quarterly report which, if nothing else, answered the following types of questions:

—how many preaching places have you
—how many schools, teachers, scholars, how many of these are natives
—how many since the last report
—Revivals.[32]

After Turpin's controversial report, statistics and discussions of Christian-type experiences dominated missionary information from the field. It was more significant to detail the conversion of an old African-born slave than to outline what appeared to be latent types of "Roman Catholic" ceremonies. The former type of religious experiences were dramatized in the pages of the *Southern Christian Advocate* in the 1840s and later.

175 799 Missionaries assigned to the Sea Islands and coastal regions maintained a healthy optimism, but reports were often discouraging. Early support from slaveholders was spasmodic and intermittent, and bondspeople took a lax attitude toward Methodist discipline. In 1835, John Coburn reported from Beaufort that, while his charge had increased to include twenty-one plantations with 400 children under catechetical instruction, "the prospects of this mission are not considered flattering." He blamed "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" for his lack of success, yet recommended that the station be continued for at least another year. In 1836 Coburn indicated that improvement had taken place, yet church membership dropped considerably because of many expulsions and the fact that some planters had withdrawn their slaves from the mission. His work was also greatly hindered because the islands, separated by wide waters, were frequently impassable for small boats.[33]

The "interference" and "foreign intermeddling" discussed by Coburn 175 came from two sources. First, Gullah leaders continued to exert influence 797 and they resented as well as resisted supersedence of their authority. Secondly, a growing number of slaves professed affiliation with Baptists of the region. Many missionaries complained that these alleged black Baptists were unfamiliar with Christian doctrines. Thus from the missionaries' point of view, the complexity was actually three-tiered: a powerful black leadership holding sway through beliefs and practices apart from Protestantism, a conflict with black "professors of the faith" whom missionaries considered mere "pretenders," and both problems compounded by the skepticism of Baptist and Episcopalian slaveholders. The missionaries admitted that religious instruction under such circumstances was a formidable task.[34]

Methodist Sea Island missionary activity experienced various periods of growth and decline. Methodism was persistent, but there was never a massive moment into the church on the part of the Gullahs. By 1839, the May and New River Mission had been discontinued and the limited number of converts absorbed by the Beaufort and Savannah River organizaiton. Also by 1839 Methodists created a new mission in the Beaufort district, called Pocotaligo, and another in the Charleston district called Edisto Island Mission, including Jehossee and Fenwick Islands. Edisto was by far the most prosperous of the Sea Island missions. By 1842 Beaufort Mission embraced thirty plantations but contained only 310 members, with 370 children under instruction. The Pocotaligo missionary ministered at nine plantations, had 295 church members, and 156 children under catechetical instruction. Progress was slow in these areas compared to other missions north of Charleston and in the upcountry. For example, the North Santee Mission embraced only fifteen plantations but had 528 church members and the Black and Pee Dee Rivers Mission covered twenty-five plantations with 1,180 church members. By the time of national division within the Methodist church in 1844, the Beaufort Mission had dropped to twenty plantation appointments, and Pocotaligo still served only nine. The Edisto Mission however, maintained steady progress.[35]

Figures relating to church membership are not impressive considering 175 the thousands of slaves in the coastal and Sea Island region. Still, Methodist 567 missionaries remained active there until 1861, even after it became 797 apparent that Baptist influence would predominate. Not only were white

175
567

gland. Industrious masters might remain near their plantations during the "sickly season" by building homes on a high bluff. From these retreats, such as St. Helenaville, they directed plantation affairs through their drivers and overseers. The enormous black population working in the fields rarely saw a white except for overseers and their families, or through brief sometimes seasonal contact with slave masters.[17]

Bondspeople were under the direct supervision of black drivers who might report to a head driver, also a black man. Slaves recognized these supervisors' powerful position as coming from an outside oppressive force. The Gullahs had little affection or even genuine respect for black drivers. Although exceptions existed, the interests of slave drivers and those of the slave community were inimical. Francis Kemble, an English resident on the Georgia Sea Island plantations of her husband Pierce Butler, described drivers in their role:

> At the upper end of the row of houses, and nearest to the overseer's residence, is the hut of the head driver . . . The negroes, . . . are divided into troops or gangs, . . . at the head of each gang is a driver, who stands over them, whip in hand, while they perform their daily task, who renders an account of each individual slave and his work every evening to the overseer, and receives from him directions for their next day's task. Each driver is allowed to inflict a dozen lashes upon any refractory slave in the field, and at the time of the offense.[18]

Laura M. Towne, a Philadelphia osteopath who went to the Sea Islands as part of the Port Royal experiment, observed the Gullahs' attitude toward slave drivers. Towne noted that the people complained of one driver in particular named Gabriel. " 'How, boys,' " he answered, " 'You know I cut and slash you for ole Massa. Ain't you know I no do dat Massa do worse.' " The men smirked at him scornfully. Certainly the black drivers' position was unenviable. They did not usually seek the role, yet were bound to do the master's bidding or face punishment themselves. Nevertheless, antipathy toward black drivers was observed on many occasions. Yankee cotton agent, Edward Philbrick, stated that their position over the masses of slaves did not seem to derive from intelligence or respect. As soon as the artificial element of force was removed by masters and overseers fleeing, "these black foremen generally dropped back to the level from which they had been temporarily raised." They had no useful authority over the slaves and attempts to reinstate them in the management of crops "generally met with singular failure." Antebellum Methodist missionaries stated the slaves believed drivers would

175 567 (533) (539) never get to heaven. Gullah soldiers sang a song about the black driver during the Civil War. White witnesses thought the song appeared "quite secular in its character, yet its author called it a 'spiritual' ":

> Fust ting my mammy tell me,
>   O' gwine away!
> Tell me bout de nigger-driver,
>   O' gwine away!
> Nigger-driver second debil. . . .

The relationship between the missionary's observation and the "spiritual" further illustrates how Gullahs viewed slave drivers. One driver, "noted as a good Negro, and a Methodist," had heard since his childhood that no driver could ever get to heaven, "and they need not try, for none . . . could see God's face in peace." The distraught man told a Methodist missionary, " 'to that tree every night I want to pray; at last God, for Christ sake, pardoned my sins.' " The black driver became fully convinced that " 'Christ is able to save a driver as well as anybody else.' " And he hoped, said the missionary, to hold out faithfully so that " 'people will see at least one driver in heaven.' "[39]

175 The type of bondage experienced by the Gullahs was related to the Lowcountry's settlement as well as the staple crops produced. The colony of Carolina was settled by West Indian planters who created a system of slavery notorious for maltreatment of black laborers. One individual, a German, traveling through the Carolina Lowcountry after the American Revolution, observed that:

> The condition of the Carolina negro slaves is in general harder and more troubulous . . . wretched food, more work, tedious work, harsh and cynical treatment at the hands of owners and overseers. There is less concern here as to their moral betterment . . . proof is in the fact that they do not multiply . . . numbers are refreshed thru importations.[40]

175 567 248 461 The continued harshness of the system was maintained. After indigo cultivation, both South Carolina and Georgia became absorbed in cotton culture. Although not as backbreaking as indigo, Sea Island cotton extracted a heavy toll from black workers in many ways. The staple needed a tremendous amount of labor and laborers, especially after 1820 when the international market value of fine cotton soared. On an average plantation, fifty to sixty days of labor per slave were required to produce one bale of fine Sea Island cotton. The crop required more hoeing than short-

staple cotton, a different type of picking, which had to be done from 175 •
only slightly opened bolls, and a painstaking preparation for the staple 567
market in the ginning process. Men were usually responsible for seed 248
extraction of Sea Island cotton. Jenkins Mikell of the Peters Point Plan- 461
tation, Edisto Island, gave an account of this activity on his father's estate:

> The operation was long, tedious and fatiguing. It was done on gins operated by foot, a crude plantation, or domestic device for getting out the seed from the lint—one man to a gin. He would stand on his left leg and work a crank-like arrangement, somewhat like a crank that drives a sewing machine, first with his right foot, then when he got tired . . . he would hop on his right foot and work his gin with his left foot—never stopping his gin as he changed. . . . As each man has thirty pounds of lint cotton to gin out for his day's work, he has no time to loaf.[41]

Sea Island slave women also performed arduous, monotonous, and fa- 175
tiguing work on the plantations. The crop was harvested from late Sep- 567
tember through December, a cold, damp part of the year on the coast. 248
Women and boys were considered the best pickers, though all field hands 461
would be ordered out at first harvest. As soon as enough cotton was 462
gathered, ginning began which took many men away from the fields. Women pickers worked rapidly yet carefully, so not to bruise the delicate fibers for this would affect the grade. Sea Island planter William Elliott maintained that "the greatest care is used by them to separate from the cotton, all dried leaves or other substances that may impair or discolour." While "prime, young and strong" women engaged in this activity, the elderly, "less sturdy" women and those near their time of childbirth worked in the gin house. They thrashed or "whipped" seed cotton to further remove loose sand or dirt then passed it on to "assorters." This group of women stood before long tables and divided the lint according to color and fineness. From there men received the "assorted" seed cotton for seed extraction. Once this was accomplished, women "moters" inspected and divided the cotton once again, removing fibers stained by the black cotton seed crushed by the gin. Finally, before packing, the cotton was subjected to one final inspection at the "mote table."[42]

The whole process created a tenseness which everyone experienced. A 17
driving momentum was kept up, but quality work was insisted upon 567
since that was the key to the lint's value. Activities were coordinated so 248
461

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

> to speak. . . . Here lay women expecting every hour the terrors and agony of childbirth, others who were groaning over the anguish . . . of miscarriages—here lay some burning with fever, others chilled with cold and aching rheumatism on the hard cold ground, the draughts and dampness of the atmosphere increasing their sufferings, and dirt, noise, and stench, and every aggravation of which sickness is capable, combined in their condition.[45] 17 567

Conditions among the female population affected Kemble deeply. She spent much time trying to alleviate deprivation and discomfort. For her concern she faced the resentment of Pierce Butler, who considered her interfering with plantation "discipline." An antislavery Englishwoman, Kemble claimed she married Butler without knowledge of his human property. Their divergent views caused dissension between them. On one occasion, Kemble wrote of Butler's reaction to the petition of a group of slave women: 175 567

> Mr. ——— was called out this evening to listen to a complaint of overwork from a gang of pregnant women. I did not stay to listen to the details of their petition, for I am unable to command myself on such occasions and Mr. ——— seemed positively degraded in my eyes as he stood enforcing upon these women the necessity of their fulfilling their appointed tasks . . . as a *duty*.[46]

The conditions of labor under the "peculiar institution" hindered longevity and a natural increase in birth rate survival among the slaves. Both races paid in different ways because cotton planters did not usually attend to their estates personally, and because they too often judged managerial quality by the magnitude of cotton profits. But illegal imports still contributed to the increase in slaves. The last slave vessel to arrive in the Sea Islands, the ship *Wanderer*, was in 1858. Sea Island planters had opposed reopening the slave trade in South Carolina in 1803, apparently because it might have decreased market value of their own slaves at a time when these planters were economically vulnerable. However, after the close of the African trade to North America in 1807, and the rise of Sea Island cotton, planters engaged in smuggling. Illegal importations continued to contribute to the native African population.[47] Even more significantly, many American-born slaves were only one or two generations from African ethnicity, because many were imported into the Sea Islands during the last two decades before the War of Independence.

Thus Methodist missionaries found very oppressed but tightly knit communities of African-Americans still clinging to patterns of social behavior and modes of worship, largely a mystery to whites, having devel-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 oped through African cultural convergence. Their pattern of speech was
567 one example of this. "Their language," wrote one missionary in 1840,
175 "though . . . understood by themselves, cannot be by one unaccustomed to them, without great study and application." It was a peculiar
567 creation—an English patois. As previously discussed, Lorenzo Dow
197 Turner's linguistic study of Gullah, conducted over a fifteen-year period, involved many former slave informants. He views Gullah as a creolized form of English with elements of survivals from African languages spoken by ethnic groups brought to South Carolina and Georgia. Turner found most retentions present in vocabulary but also in elements of sound, syntax, morphology, intonation, and word formation. Yet as previously mentioned, Gullah was even more than a distinct pidgin English or dialect, but a means of expressing oneself in the most graphic and sometimes literal sense. Arthur Sumner, a Northern teacher on the Sea Islands during the Civil War, found it "easier to understand a foreign language":

> 'Talk we get dinner,' means 'do you mean that I shall get dinner?'
>
> Byron came to me this morning with a message from his mother.—'Ma says, if you give her some trade. . . .' Can you make it out? Oh, dull girl! The meaning is clear. Ma wants to know if you will give her some thread.[48]

William F. Allen, another Northern teacher, also wrote about the Gullah's peculiar interpretations and usage of English. For instance, "stand," referred to the state or condition of a person, place or thing. On one occasion, Allen, teaching sentence structure to a class of children, had them go over to the window and then asked them the color of the sky. "Nobody could tell," and most of them "stared straight ahead at Jimmy, who was in the yard, and I half expected them to say 'black.' " Finally "Abraham" ventured "white," then "red." Dick, a former house man, passed by the window and Allen expressed his frustration, to which Dick replied promply, " 'lick'em":

> "Well Dick," said I, here's a chance for you to lick Tom, who was appearing around a corner of the barn. "Tom, what's the color of the sky?" Tom stared at the sky, but said nothing. Dick grinned. "Tom, how sky *stan'?*" "Blue" shouted Tom.[49]

175 Missionaries categorized black spirituality as "curious superstitions" or
793 as types of worship reminiscent of Catholicism. Gullahs had their own
797 religious leaders who sometimes professed Christianity and solicited

sanction from planters and overseers as the "spiritual elders" of the people. 175 One St. Helena planter who spent little time on the island, wrote 793 to the Methodist missionary assigned there in 1833 that he hoped the 797 Methodists could improve the religious condition among the Gullahs. The biggest problem according to the planters was the black leaders whose control had to be broken.[50]

Thus missionaries vied with black spiritual advisers for religious leadership in the slave community.[51] There was no way for the Methodists to counter the influence of slaves whom the Gullahs regarded as spiritual advisers but who made no claim to Christianity. Methodists felt that under Christian instruction customs and practices perpetrated by this leadership would die out in time. But the missionaries believed black leaders who fused "paganism" with Christianity were most detrimental to the Methodist cause. These leaders had either to be set on the "true" path or their influence undermined. The competition proved difficult. Everywhere they went among the Gullahs, missionaries found black leaders successfully impeding Methodist influence. From Beaufort Mission, T. E. Ledbetter reported in 1836 that although some "pious" Episcopalian planters allowed missionaries to preach to slaves, he saw no evidence of progress:

> . . . we combat a great many falso notions, and . . . fatal doctrines which have been elderly imbibed by the colored population through the instrumentality of ignorant and superstitious teachers among themselves. And nothing is more difficult to overcome than a strongly prejudiced understanding . . . many among them are opposed to us.[52]

Some missionaries, even without planter approval, attempted completely to halt black spiritual leadership. Others hoped to communicate with Gullahs by recognizing or even appointing certain "elders." Both tactics often bred frustration. From Pocotaligo Mission in Beaufort District, John N. Davies reported in 1840:

> A black man, one of them [the slaves] whom they claim for their spiritual father, and, as they say, "had brought them through the spirit," became corrupted and inflated with self-importance—I gave him a close talk, with a design of moving him, when he held up the wand of his sweeping influence by asserting that all the children [the people] would follow him. As we have no authority to visit them at the plantation we chose the only mode of saving them, . . . to select and appoint a zealous and upright man, of their number to be with him as an aid and guard; meanwhile a noise came from abroad of large depredations being

> 175 793 797 committed which implicated this and several plantations . . . nearly all have ceased to attend and we fear they are rushing to ruin—Lord have mercy upon them and upon me.[53]

This missionary's report typifies one significant aspect of white attempts to usurp black leadership — that of replacing an individual who could not be subordinated with one seemingly more controllable. Undoubtedly, the "zealous and upright" man was more cooperative than pious. The audacious missionary had no access to the plantation where his spiritual rival lived, nor apparently did he have the good wishes and confidence of the planter. Some planters left it completely up to the Gullahs as to whether or not they attended missionary services, and others specifically forbade it; this contributed to the continued presence and influence of black leaders. Moreover, as the Davies' account reveals, slaves given passes to attend preaching appointments often found other more lucrative or entertaining means of utilizing their temporary mobility. Fear of this limited movement and assembly was a continual obstruction in obtaining unified support for religious instruction from the slaveholders. When Christian conversion took on a new seriousness in 1845, large slave gatherings for religious purposes, never popular, were discontinued and the emphasis shifted to individual and family instruction on plantations. The latter type of religious teaching eventually brought the Methodists more success.[54]

Still many Gullahs displayed skepticism toward the Methodists and resisted offending their own leaders. From Pocotaligo, John N. Davies continued to inform the public of his problems:

> We have had some trouble at another preaching place, occasioned by the puffing up of father S., as he is called, but plantation authority forbids his guiding the people. They have appeared spellbound, not to move or think without him. He a poor creature of dust imagines himself to be the Great Shepherd whose voice alone "the sheep know," and whom alone the true sheep will follow. . . . We visit the plantations and explain as far as possible. God grant us brighter days and better times.

175 797 But despite only marginal encouragement from both planters and slaves, the missionaries continued to "suffer and rejoice and pray and labor." And from the beginning, though suspicious and cautious, some slaves came to hear the missionaries by choice. The fact of their attendance was considered progress as expressed by one optimistic missionary in 1835:

175
797

> Although the colored people were generally in a lukewarm state and inattentive to preaching when I commenced, there has been an encouraging improvement, whether it is the novelty of the thing that has drawn them out, or the special regard had to them by their owners in getting a preacher exclusively for them, I know not, but one thing is certain . . . they attend the appointments very regularly and a deep concern is manifested in the congregation generally."[55]

The Gullah's increasing attention to Methodist presence can be understood on a number of levels. In the life of a slave any occasion which brought a cessation from labor was welcomed. One can imagine the excitement as well as skepticism in the quarters when news spread of the coming of a white "spiritual man" whose sole purpose was to administer to slaves. Certainly their interest was measured. Yet for these isolated African-Americans the special attention itself was something new. Furthermore, preaching places facilitated gathering of bondspeople from various plantations, providing opportunities to visit with friends, relatives, and probably lending a gaiety and sense of freedom to the event. Missionaries recorded little lasting progress of a religious nature as a result of their preaching at these large assemblies. Planters insisted the gatherings produced more harm to the system. But these occasions appealed to the slaves for reasons other than the spiritual content of the sermons. Preaching stations provided many with their only opportunity to be away from the plantation. Monthly meetings became convivial holiday-type excursions, adding to the few outlets in a life too often dulled by pointless, profitless toil. The gatherings provided a reason for attending to personal hygiene, to don whatever their "best" attire consisted of—faded though colorful turbans and caps; their one pair of shoes; tattered, coarse and worn, yet carefully laundered gingham skirts and breeches of iridescent check. Missionaries reported with frustration that slaves readily engaged in the singing and attentively responded to the prayers, but many slept through whole sermons although at the meeting's end they heartily shook hands and thanked the missionary "fur de Wud."[56] Gullah gratitude was probably not so much for the Word as for what it represented in terms of offering an alleviation of routine. Such comments may have been expressions of cynicism. Yet some missionaries evinced a genuine concern and imparted to the Gullahs a different sense of worth and dignity. The most positive and uplifting principles of the "religion of the heart" seeped through the lessons on obedience, subordination, and prostration. And the Gullahs came to recognize a

● 175 797 relationship between Christian imagery and their own historical position. This was the triumph for which the committed amongst the missionaries labored. They added but few "true" Methodists to church rolls but won the "heart" of many slaves. Nevertheless, even at its soul searching, heartrending best, slaves employed Methodism as an exculpation from bondage. Those preaching among the slaves imparted a spiritual ideology founded upon this premise. The dualism of the religion was not lost on the Gullahs.

175 In the period before the national division of the Methodist church, missionary activity was circumspectly observed by slaveholders who feared that antislavery doctrines, inadvertently or otherwise, might be disseminated. The South Carolina Conference instructed that the content of sermons emphasize the "duty" of servants to masters, not because it would avert suspicion, but because the state episcopacy sincerely believed this was the most important element of Christianity to be taught to slaves. In any case, the textbook prepared by William Capers for the use of plantation missionaries, referred to as a catechism, reflected an interpretation of the Christian religion to an enslaved people. The introductory section consisted of hymns, prayers, commandments, the Creed, and portions of the scripture having to do with duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, and servants and masters. The remainder of the little book was in question-and-answer form, obviously designed for slave children. This portion of the text covered parts of the Bible that the South Carolina Conference specifically wanted pointed out, namely, the creation, the fall, and the life and death of Christ.[17]

For sermons, St. Paul provided the missionaries with favorite subjects and was also the apostle most quoted by proslavery elements. Other scriptural texts used ostensibly relegated blacks to a fate of perpetual bondage and aimed at convincing them to accept enslavement as the natural order. Slaves were taught a selective Christianity—a doctrine of contentment and humility. No text espousing such scriptural tenets as "The truth shall make you free" or "The laborer is worthy of his hire" could be preached. There was of course none of the militant Christianity discovered and expounded by the black rebels in Charleston years before. Most of the Old Testament was ignored except when certain passages could serve as a conduit further to reinforce white domination.

One account of the narrow latitude of preaching was left by Lunds-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

175

ford Lane. Lane, born a slave in North Carolina, purchased his freedom and became an abolitionist lecturer. He wrote:

> "I often heard select portions of the Scriptures read. . . . On Sunday we always had one sermon prepared expressly for the colored people, which it was generally my privilege to hear. So great was the similarity of the texts that they are always fresh in memory: "Servants, be obedient to your masters—not with eye-service, as men-pleasers." "He that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes"; and some others of this class. Similar passages with but few exceptions, formed the basis of most of these public instructions. . . . I will not do them the injustice to say that connected with these instructions there was not mingled much that was excellent . . . one very kind-hearted clergyman . . . was very popular with the coloured people. But after he had preached a sermon from the Bible that it was the will of Heaven from all eternity that we should be slaves, and our masters be our owners many of us left him, considering, like the doubting disciple of old, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it."[38]

Steady outpourings of sermons stressing obedience and duty would not win slaves to Christianity. Black laborers as a group refused to accept a religion filled with aphorisms that emphasized their perpetual subjugated role in the human family. But implementation of other more personal approaches brought Methodist missionaries some success. Catechizing of children, for instance, was ardently attended to, for they were the hope of the enterprise. Church emissaries were encouraged by the children's eagerness and brightness. They learned quickly, if not always perfectly, and they expressed more enthusiasm for the individual missionary than for his religion. Nevertheless, slave children of the 1830s and 1840s were expected to provide the Lowcountry with a future generation of black workers who, from an early age, imbibed and personalized Christianity as taught by white missionaries. Yet while catechism taught to children might be insurance for the future, adult slaves, considered to have "grown up in ignorance," did not readily respond to that learning process. Nor did slaveholders usually provide time for such instruction. But Methodists determined to awaken enthusiasm for Christianity among the adult slaves, otherwise not only would black laborers remain "heathen," they would not encourage Christianity among the young. Thus the efforts of slave conversion would be undermined. The Gullahs' confidence had to be acquired, and the more dedicated missionaries pursued this end diligently.[39]

• 175 The "class meeting" was an important method of personal instruction and among the slaves its function was broadened in an effect to quicken their interest in Christianity. In "class," adults were given instruction, doctrines were explained, and general check-ups were made on the progress of individuals. Here the missionary asked and answered individual questions and slaves related the nature of their religious experiences. Also, through examinations in "class meetings" missionaries ascertained the state of Christianity on the plantation, and decided who was ready for church membership. Furthermore, since "class" was held on individual estates, the missionaries could have more impact than at the preaching places. In "class," the missionary could, if he chose, be less didactic and more intimate. Some missionaries elaborated on the most dramatic portions of the Bible, hence capturing the Gullahs' imagination. Through these gatherings the missionary became acquainted with his large "flock," usually getting to know the adults and children by name. He ultimately became a familiar face on the plantations he visited, sometimes welcomed and sometimes resented. William Capers wrote to the slave missionaries:

> Class meetings are especially ours. A missionary should emphatically be these three things—a preacher, a catechist, and a class leader. He must be the class leader, whoever may engage to assist him. . . . Unvaried pains should be taken to instruct them in the nature of Christian experience, both by remarks to the class in general, and to each individual. . . . Organization is a main thing in Methodism, and a main thing for missions. Without it there can be no efficient training, little permanent instruction, no order, no discipline.[60]

But "organization," "order," or "discipline" did not impress the Gullahs as much as the sincerity of motive some missionaries conveyed as they acquainted themselves with their charges. Preachers were required to attend the pastoral needs of their widespread congregation. Although some neglected this feature of their duties, others engaged in the work with deliberate gravity. Many missionaries felt more able to open the slaves' heart to Christianity by this method. Some of the most interesting
175 "Missionary Sketches" printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* were
797 written by A. M. Chreitzberg, stationed on the Beaufort Mission and elsewhere in the Sea Island region. Chreitzberg wrote from the Sea Islands, summarizing his duties outside the pulpit. He provided illuminating insights into the ways some missionaries merited gratitude and confidence from some of the bondspeople:

> It is not only the duty of the missionary to catechize the children and preach to the adults, but also to visit the sick and aged, and it is here that many a triumph has been achieved for his Lord. Many a dark and benighted soul has been brought into the light and liberty of the Gospel. Here, too, does he frequently prepare himself for the exercises of the pulpit, for it is here that he learns the way to the negro's heart, and becomes acquainted with his ideas of God and religion. The negro knows that his minister is not ashamed to enter his smoky cabin, to take him by his rough and toil-hardened hand, and talk to him about the way to heaven, or to kneel beside his bed, offer prayer in his behalf, and to pour into his heart the consolation of God's word. It is this that frequently takes his heart captive, and binds him to the cross.[41]

175
797

Here then was the religion of the warm heart at its spiritually redeeming best among the Gullahs. A disarming warmth of feeling, an effort to bridge, spiritually at least, the gap between black and white, slave and free was to serve a definite purpose. Such acts, seemingly prompted purely by human kindness, deeply affected the Gullahs, so unaccustomed to being objects of concern among whites except in matters related to labor. Gradually, the more seasoned missionaries like Chreitzberg began to stimulate a "change of heart" in the slaves. Especially affecting was the adaptation of some sermons and lectures to the daily lives and fortunes of the Gullahs. Hence they came to identify elements of Christianity with their own circumstances. Skillful variation of preaching methods, coupled with a fraternal spirit which the missionaries demonstrated toward the Gullahs, was effective. By the mid-1840s a goodly number of slaves had "professed" their conversion to Christianity under Methodist tutelage.

Missionaries such as Chreitzberg took full advantage of opportunities to service their black congregations in the hope of winning more converts. Below Chreitzberg describes the value to be derived from officiating at a Gullah night funeral: 17 797

> "What" says the not-to-be-disturbed-at-night Pastor of a Chapel of Ease, "put yourself to the trouble of burying a *dead* negro?" Why not? We have unsuperable objections to burying a *living* one, but see no reason why the last sad office of the Church should not be performed over the remains of the black man. Has he no affections, are there no weeping friends to be consoled. . . . But apart from this, may not the living be effectually warned? When the dead man lies before them in all his helplessness, stricken down in his prime and (as in this case) suddenly called to the final account,—what better time to read to them a lesson on the uncertainty of life.

175 Dis berry same Jesus, dis berry same Jesus,
797 We heares dese people de talk about;
533 Dis berry same Jesus . . .

[539) Chreitzberg finished his labors and headed back to Beaufort by boat. Undoubtedly the black boatmen had heard his sermon. It was a dark night and the effect of the scene was heightened by "one of those thundergusts, so frequent in our latitudes." Chreitzberg and his associate sat at the stern of the boat, comfortably "gazing at the clouds." The lightening gleamed in the distance, "with the sullen roll of the distant thunder":

> We were sitting at ease in the stern of the boat, suddenly a sound struck upon our ear, that we can liken to nothing save the shriek of a lost spirit. This we found to be the chorus of a song the boat hands were preparing to sing, the chorus we cannot write; it was something between a groan and the cry,—"have mercy"; and was sung at the end of every line.

[539) O Lord, O Lord! what shall we do?
What shall we do, what shall we do?
What shall we do for a hiding place;
No hiding place for sinner here.
We run to de sea—de sea run dry;
We run to de rock—de rock da sink;
We run to de tree—de tree ketch fire;
We run to de grave—de grave bus open;
We run to de door—de door shut close;
We wring we hands, we grine we feet,
We cry O Lord, O Lord, O Lord,
No hidin' place for sinner here!

> The words written, may only serve to excite a smile, but when sung, the effect is directly the reverse; as in the intensity of excitement, one holds his breath to catch every intonation of the voice; he will, in spite of himself, be affected to tears.[45]

175 The Gullahs sense of their own human frailty was expressed in their
567 spirituals. Illness, floggings, fatigue from overwork, and the ubiquity of
777 death were features of daily existence. The harsh Sea Island bondage must have contributed to a longing for a better world at best or for
[533) another one at the very least. For some slaves an eternal reward would justify a life that was often painful and joyless yet not without hope. Some conscious rationale regarding a future being might ease a portion of the strong sense of injustice felt toward the present, and fill gaps left

by features of traditional African religion and philosophy not transferable or appliable to the New World situation. 175 In this way the Gullahs 567 gradually developed a holistic religion with components of both experiences. 771 The helplessnss implicit in the Christian motif was a central ingredient of Methodist teaching. But one need not seek an explanation for identification with Christianity in Methodism alone, with its prostrating sense of fatalism. Aside from biblical example, and need for a complete world view, the Gullahs' own ill-fated lives and the frequent occurrence of untimely deaths were often sufficient to bring forth the poetry from within. The following Sea Island torchlight burial is an example of the 175 kind of tragic scene that might well motivate the creation of a spiritual: 764

> On one occasion of burial, I have reason to believe much good was done. A woman, who was a member of the Church, and who had died in full hope of immortal life, was to be buried at night, it being the most convenient time for the people to be together. Accordingly I met the people at the time appointed. The plantation being large, many were present. The corpse was conveyed about a quarter of a mile to the burial ground, the procession moving slowly and silently along, with lighted torches interspersed through the ranks. This presented a solemn scene; but after we arrived at the burying place it was still more solemn. A grove standing in the midst of a large clearing, which had been sacredly kept for years as belonging to the dead, undisturbed even by the footsteps of man, except when another was to be laid in the earth, and under the shade of the cedars. Here we all met in the midst of the grove, around the grave. It was a dark night, but in the midst of the grove it was still more dark. All was silent, except the thrilling note of the whippoorwill, who had made this lonely retreat its home; all around us lay the graves of the dead of all sizes. The reflection from many torches presented them full in view in every direction, as though they had but just been closed; so thick was the shade above that no grass grew on that spot. I have attended many of my fellow beings to the grave; but never did I witness a more solemn time, and yet I felt it a blessed time. I felt it a duty to try and improve the occasion of our being together; and indeed it was a time of weeping—some of the most stubborn were melted into tears. The husband of the deceased and her infant child were near the grave; he, before a careless man, now wept aloud—and since that period has shown his grief was not of a worldly kind; he has offered himself to the Church, and his child he has had baptized. Many others on the plantation have become serious, and are now on trial.[66]

The spectacle of this young woman's funeral and the presence of the (771) white missionary preaching the prospect of life after death aroused thoughts of the finality of human life and generated desires to transcend reality and be projected into a peaceful future existence. (533) More than likely a

175 burial scene such as the one above prompted the creation of a most poi-
764 gnant Gullah spiritual. It was recorded during the Civil War by Thomas
Wentworth Higginson, Commander of the First South Carolina Volun-
533 teers. He considered it "the most poetic of all their songs."

(539) I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
Lay dis body down.
I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight
To lay dis body down.
I'll walk in de graveyard, I'll walk through de graveyard,
To lay dis body down.
I'll lie in de grave and stretch out my arms;
Lay dis body down.
I go to de Judgment in de evinin' ob de day
When I lay dis body down.
And my soul and your soul will meet in de day
When I lay dis body down.[67]

175 Certainly Gullahs wanted to believe in a bondless futurity, and many
accepted assurances of the missionaries, if not their discipline. Undoubt-
771 edly, a number of Gullahs felt that their existence on earth offered so
797 little and mortal doom was so certain that nothing was gambled by
adopting Christianity. Their imaginations and aspirations were quick-
567 ened by inspiring parables, stimulating renditions of undeserved agonies
of the long-suffering man-god, his earthly demise, and ultimate triumphant rebirth. The parallels were clearly hard to resist.

Thus it might appear that the hopes and expectations of planters such as C. C. Pinckney were realized—that as professors of Christianity, slaves resigned themselves to their circumstances in return for the hope of a heavenly future. Yet it is a mistake to interpret the Gullahs' acceptance of some Christian teachings as a reflection of negative attitudes toward earthly life. Nor did such teachings instill a sense of futility and resignation. Christianity as interpreted by the slaves did not induce them to disavow the present as much as it served to mitigate the inhumane features of their existence as slaves. For the Gullahs, Christianity was a spiritual release from anxieties, frustrations, and animosities, providing a frame of reference to understand their position as bondspeople. In this sense the religion of the slaveholders was diluted, becoming for the slaves a source of strength embodied in their use of Christian ideology as a personification of their will to freedom. Major emphasis of slave religion was not "otherworldly." What Gullahs accepted in Christianity did not

175 771 797 567 prevent the kind of defensive acts which the planters anticipated would cease. Flight, theft, and reluctance to labor were means of undermining plantation order and were acts of resistance that continued to plague planters although more and more blacks became "converted."[68] True, they did not rise in revolt. Memories of the consequences of failed rebellion attempts and strong kinship ties encouraged another type of resistance involving less individual risk while creating more collective energy. The goal after all was freedom. Doctrines of the New Testament exposed the Gullahs to a kind of freedom in a spiritual sense but also upheld their right to physical liberty and equality.

175 797 567 Gullah reaction to Christianity under Methodist tutelage was complex. On the one hand, the slaves responded to the warmth and tolerance demonstrated by missionaries. Acts of sincerity and kindness induced the slaves to take an interest in Methodist teachings. Once Gullahs applied Christianity to their own daily lives, they grasped how its tenets could, in some ways, reflect the nature of their experiences as a people. On the other hand, the paradox inherent in Christian teaching as presented by the Methodists did not escape them. Gullahs rejected doctrines instructing them to be dutiful and obedient to slave masters, but embraced the teachings about the suffering of Christ, the resurrection, and the impartiality of a future judge who would right past wrongs. One finds no evidence of spirituals applauding an obedient slave, admonishing a disobedient one, or warning a slave against the retribution extracted by God for "crimes" against a slave master. The benne seed ritual evinced just the opposite implication. Contrary to the planter's desire, slaves did not fear "another tribunal," and as "Christians," continued stealing corn and rice, burning cotton, and fleeing to the swamps and marshes. If anything, the introduction of Christianity among the Gullahs enhanced their justification for deploring the system of bondage, and provided sound arguments for what was sensed all along—the equality of humankind.

175 797 152 786 The strongest reaction against Methodism existed because of the cultural barrier between missionaries and Gullahs. Although early white Methodism accepted emotional expressions as signs of godliness, missionaries among the Gullahs emphasized a primarily stodgy instructional approach to Christianity. Methodists permitted and applauded the emotional outpourings characterizing Gullah spirituals. But other physical manifestations were often viewed as "ungodly." Missionaries noted that

● 175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to instruct
797 them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
152 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural"
786 means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black
impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be
silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly
described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a
religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity
of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in
the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah
preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in
more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black
converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a
797 total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately
supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices.
The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped
for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs
in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as
175 well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude
contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
177 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christianity
178 remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating
humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state.
In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural
diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs
were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African
religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices
of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola),
and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah
spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to traditions
175 of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists arrived
among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African
797 customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

175 •
from Baptist and Episcopalian masters, and limited contact with black 797
preachers.

The Methodists' systematic religious instruction provided Gullahs with 175
the first opportunity for a uniform type of religious culture. This socio- 771
religious nexus did not vary from plantation to plantation or from island 797
to island. It was based on a moral philosophy, not precluding the pres-
ervation to some extent of a continued faith in the customs of African-
born forebears. The emerging religious association resembled and gave
expression to a world view brought from Africa, common to the Gul-
lahs, and suited to their circumstances. More than any other features of (181)
the Christian religion, the Gullahs embraced its moral virtues—human-
ity, humility, fairness, a sense of the dignity of the sufferer, and belief
in the merit of all people. No matter how one regards these values, they
are celebrated in Christianity, and it was this spirit in Methodist teach-
ings that the Gullahs accepted. The letter of the law, in a strict Mosaic
form, and the Pauline sanction of servitude were rejected. There was
little room for internalization of the dogma present in Christianity as
taught by whites. That would have negated Gullahs' previous belief pat-
terns and their hatred of bondage. Gullah folk Christianity was an ar- 791
dently felt religion. It was a religion which elevated them above their
masters' efforts to make them contented slaves. Far more than Method- 175
ism perhaps, Gullah folk religion was a religion of the heart. Their spirituality helped them channel what was expected to be hopelessness, helplessness, and prostration into the forging and further enrichment of a culture. Through individual stamina, collective faith, and cultural development they merged as a people. Their collective faith kept them spiritually free in spite of physical bondage. Their collective faith, together with spiritual freedom, and matched with natural gifts and talents, provided Gullahs with a will to create, the courage to persevere, and power, as a "prepolitical" people, to use religion as a progressive force and shield against white psychological and cultural domination. This collective faith allowed them to believe in themselves and in their dream of ultimate freedom.[71]

The year 1845 was momentous for the history of slave conversion in 175
South Carolina and for the nation as a whole. At that time the Methodist Episcopal Church South and the Southern Baptist Convention were organized. Both denominations pledged to make a more zealous thrust in Christian instruction of the black population. Also, in May of that year,

● 175 South Carolina statesmen and clergy called a meeting in Charleston, inviting slaveholders either to attend or submit in writing information on the state of religious instruction among slaves on their plantations.[72] After that time, Christian conversion of bondspeople occupied a more prominent position in antebellum life and thought. It became an issue with social, economic, political, and even moral implications. What was previously viewed as a movement of questionable value soon transformed into a crusade. As the national scene became more and more polarized because of the slavery issue, it was incumbent upon Southerners, as a defense against their "national character," to see that bondspeople received some type of Christian instruction.

175 797 Although efforts to Christianize slaves became widespread, Methodist presence in the Sea Island region receded. By the late 1840s Methodism there was more symbolic than effective. Even at the time of the Charleston Meeting, Episcopalian planters most actively solicited the services of Methodist missionaries. However, the fact remains that for nearly fifteen years Methodists were the major Christian influence among the Gullahs, planting a foundation for the growth of Christianity among slaves of the Sea Islands and coastal regions. However, the Baptist denomination, once it engaged in religious instruction, claimed the harvest of "converted" slaves.

17 been preached for many years to our Negroes." The boast needs qualification and amplification. Certainly as far back as Whitefield and the Bryans periodic spurts of whites *preaching* to blacks occurred. Also the more recent and protracted Methodist presence in the Lowcountry is another illustration. Moreover, some slaves could occasionally take advantage of the few existing white-controlled black churches in the Savannah and Augusta, Georgia area. Most Baptist churches in the region were members of the Savannah River Baptist Association organized in 1803 by Georgia and South Carolina. In 1818 the Association divided, including only churches north of the Savannah River and within South Carolina. Jurisdiction was in the districts of Beaufort, Barnwell, and Colleton, but most member churches were concentrated in Beaufort District. By 1830 the Savannah River Association consisted of thirty-two churches. Back rows and galleries seated free blacks, as well as domestic and artisan slaves. Thus despite assurances of William Fripp, prior to 1830 the masses of slaves were not included in Baptist apostolic activity and only nominally represented in a few white congregations.[1]

• 175 797 In 1831 and 1832, a short-lived but prolific Lowcountry revival occurred and reportedly stirred a number of planters in the Sea Island region to accept a religious affiliation. The effects of this "remarkable" religious awakening were most visible in Baptist congregations, and records of the Savannah River Baptist Association indicate a comparatively large membership increase in these churches. By 1831 the largest Beaufort District churches were Euhaw, Pipe Creek, Black Swamp, Beaufort, St. Helena, and May River. In 1830, just prior to the revival, the combined number of baptismal candidates for these churches was 164. Toward the end of 1831, a total of 228 baptisms were reported. In 1832 [795] Black Swamp and Pipe Creek made no reports, but the other four larger churches reported a total of 619 baptisms.[2] Considering the paucity of whites in these areas the numbers represent significant increases. Early records had no racial breakdown, but evidence indicates that some of the converts before 1831 were black.

175 567 797 Both Episcopalian and Baptist planters "smitten" during the famous 1831 revival reportedly took new interest in Christianizing their slaves. The former denomination allowed Methodist missionaries to preach and teach among bondspeople. No missionary movement for slaves was organized by the Baptists, however. And rather than allow Methodists on their plantations, most Baptist planters who favored the enterprise preferred to accept "converted" slaves into their own churches.[3]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Even some time after 1831, general Baptist concern for the spiritual 175•
well-being of their slaves was limited. Only a small number of churches 797
showed significant increases in church membership in about a ten-year 567
period following the revival. This gradual progression itself was unique to older Sea Island churches. Leading Baptists stimulated to "duty" by the "revival spirit," and mindful of the currents affecting church and state nationally, attempted to generate more Christianizing activity through their influence in the Savannah River Baptist Association. In 1832 the Association formed a committee to seek funds from member churches to hire Baptist missionaries for the slaves. Since this effort was a slow process, the Association further recommended that ministers devote a certain part of their time exclusively to the slaves. The organization went on record as "feeling a deep interest for the spiritual improvement of our colored population, who have hitherto been neglected."[4]

The committee was composed of large slaveholders, many of whom were also deacons or pastors of the more prosperous churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, Black Swamp, Hilton Head, and Euhaw. These congregations had comparatively large black memberships, and the committee members were known for their "good works" in general and for the (794) interest they took in converting their own slaves. But the resolutions expressed more of the committee's own sentiments and personal concern than a real plan of action. Baptist congregations were autonomous, and slaveholders in the Sea Island region resisted efforts of individuals in the denomination to create a Christian instruction movement. For a variety of reasons, Baptist efforts at slave conversion met with some success where it existed. But if measured in terms of church membership and frequency of exposure, such endeavors, were not extensive.[5]

About a third of South Carolina's Baptist laymen and two-fifths of the ministers were slaveholders. Baptists in the Sea Island region, the most numerous sect since 1820, counted the wealthiest and largest slaveholders among its numbers. Consequently, antislavery sentiments were never expressed there despite early debates elsewhere in the South. On the contrary, the official opinion of South Carolina Baptists was expressed in 1822 following the Vesey Conspiracy, by Richard Furman of Charleston. "Slavery," wrote Furman, "was clearly established in the Holy Scriptures by both precept and example."[6]

Nevertheless, South Carolina Baptists confronted strong abolitionist sentiment from church members in other regions. As with Methodists, the controversy dominated national meetings in the 1830s. Abolitionists'

175 797 567 primary target was Baptist home and foreign missions. There antislavery elements labored to obtain official condemnation of their Southern brethren not only for slaveholding but for hypocrisy in attempting to spread Christianity domestically and abroad while ignoring their own bondspeople. Accusations prompted some prestigious Baptists to encourage more attentiveness to slave conversion. However, abolitionist recriminations also infuriated Southern congregations. Sea Island Baptists raged over the presence of abolitionist-oriented home and foreign mission "agents." They also denounced abolitionist dissemination of religious newspapers. One such newspaper, *The Christian Reflector*, which argued against a scriptural interpretation of slavery, was sent to Sea Island churches. Not all Northern Baptists were antislavery. Even some of those who were did not advocate abolition, nor propose interference with slavery. Yet the situation was perceived as threatening in the Lowcountry, and it was impossible to procure a consensus on instruction from congregations whose only tie with the regional association was voluntary. Yet, larger churches continued to scrutinize and contemplate the situation. In 1837 further proclamations were used to stir congregations into activity. The Euhaw Church representatives spoke out on the "spiritual destitution of our colored population," and urged the Association to act. The committee previously formed in 1832 had apparently met with little success, and offered three resolutions on the issue. First, emphasizing the duty of ministers to pay "especial attention" to the slaves' spiritual condition. Second, that the "Domestic Missionary" preach to slaves whenever an "opportunity may be offered him." Third, that the General Committee consider the subject and adopt measures to "best secure to our colored population spiritual instruction."[7]

175 Clearly no real commitment was as yet outlined. A few individual churches were already engaging in evangelism among the slaves and attempting to persuade others. The message was one of urging a sense of responsibility, since the Savannah River Baptist Association lacked power to bind churches to a strong general policy. the Association's resources allowed them to employ one missionary, but mainly to serve whites. He ordained officers, preached at the various established churches with no regular ministers, generally superintended the constitution of new churches, and preached to "destitute" whites. Although not specifically precluded from preaching to slaves, the missionary's other extensive obligations prevented his going to plantations where he was needed or ac-

cepted. The Association did not gain approval to hire a missionary for the bondspeople until 1839. But he encountered so much opposition that by the end of that year, he had no progress report to make and refused to continue in the position.[8]

Among Northern and Southern Baptist clergymen scriptural arguments over slavery were hotly debated and further hindered Baptist planters' involvement in Christianizing activity. According to planters, Northern Baptists were attempting to "procure the massacre of our wives and children" by preaching that all people of the South had a God-given right to freedom.[9] Certainly slaveholders realized that the Bible denounced bondage as well as supported it. Why else would clergymen emphasize "oral" instruction as a means of Christian instruction? Faced with the double meaning of scriptures and fearing the impact of an egalitarian interpretation of the teachings of Christ, religious instruction of the slaves remained unimpressive in the 1830s among most Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association. The Association attempted to meet the issue head on. To pave the way for a Baptist missionary enterprise, the question of the biblical sanction of slavery needed to be firmly and convincingly laid to rest. In 1841 Association ministers issued their position, hoping the resolution would be accepted as official so the work of Christian conversion could commence:

> Resolved, that the subject of slavery has been discussed until all men who seek candidly for truth must be satisfied. The whole Bible, and all history concur to settle this point, there where Christianity finds slavery existing as one of the institutions of a nation, it tolerates it, and seeks not to disturb the relation of master and servant by violence—but to infuse the spirit of love into each of these parties, and prescribes their respective duties—duties which it becomes us to perform on our part, and which, if performed, would render our slaves the happiest and most contented peasantry on earth.[10]

Thus the spirit of Christianity would inspire "love" and stimulate both master and slave to perform their "duty." For the slave, this duty entailed acceptance of a Christianity that taught meekness, subordination, docility, inferiority, and recognition of the rights of master over slave. The master was "burdened" with the "duty" or instilling these "virtues" in bondspeople to make the slaves' "happiness" and "contentment" complete. Some Baptists became reeducated to this manner of thinking, for the resolution was followed by a request from two Sea Island congrega-

175 797 tions for the services of a missionary, approved by the Association of course.

> The Hilton Head Church, and Dawfuskie Church, request your body to send a missionary to preach on these islands. We want, say they, a man of piety and talents suited to our colored population. Your committee recommend that your messengers to the Sunbury Association be requested to solicit our Br. Farley R. Sweat, of Savannah to engage at once in this work, and to occupy this post. These churches have had their desires turned towards this brother, and God has so clearly intimated his will as to Br. Sweat, that your committee cannot believe he will refuse to yield himself to the call of his master. These churches will contribute liberally to the support of their missionary.[11]

Here we observe the close relationship between the Sunbury Association in Georgia and the Savannah River Association in South Carolina. The African Baptist Church was part of the Sunbury Association, and as previously discussed, South Carolina slaves sometimes joined or attended the black church in Savannah. The proximity of Hilton Head and Dawfuskie Islands to Savannah made this possible. Thus in some areas of the coast, slaves not regularly instructed by white Baptists, were exposed to the faith through members of their own race. This contact went further back than the first Baptist missionary to Hilton Head and Dawfuskie.

These two churches' requests did not stimulate a large-scale movement to hire missionaries, but other Sea Island congregations began individually to engage in spreading Christian influence among the Gullahs. Some 175 Southern religionists and "enlightened" planters had, since the Vesey Conspiracy, been convinced that Christian inculcation of slaves was the best security for the plantation system. But when the Northern and Southern churches severed relations in 1844, such approaches were pursued in earnest. While a sense of obligation was expressed, the prominence which secular motives received in the course of the Christian conversion movement was evident at the Charleston Meeting in 1845. Notables who gathered there to champion the cause of Christianizing African-Americans specified their major concerns:

> The degree of benefit apparently derived by the Negroes generally from the instruction imparted, and particularly as it regards their morals—their tempers and their conduct . . . their regard to truth—the rights of property—and their observance of the Sabbath.
>
> The influence of this instruction upon the discipline of the plantation and the spirit and subordination of the negroes.[12]

Emphasis shifted away from old arguments related to a fear of militant principles within Christianity and toward the pacific features of that religion. The idea that Christianity could serve as the safeguard of the Southern white community was a minority opinion in the 1820s when, because of the Vesey Conspiracy, Northern clergymen were blamed for inspiring and encouraging religious teachings inimical to Southern survival. However, after 1845 arguments favoring Christian instruction of slaves as a societal safety valve became the pillar of clergymen's reasoning in attempting to awaken planters. Now religious instruction was undertaken and accomplished without interference from non-Southerners. Slaves were instructed in a manner that planters believed did not weaken the South's socioeconomic structure. On the contrary, the training was expected to strengthen and solidify the master-slave relationship. By employing a selective type of teaching and promoting Christianity as an individual not a collective experience, Baptists and others felt they quelled concerted rebellious attitudes.

In their published sermons intended for black audiences, ministers of all denominations emphasized the life of "meek and lowly Jesus," his ability to quietly bear personal suffering, his abhorrence of violence and of disorder. Missionaries and ministers concentrated on miraculous aspects of Christianity, parables, and historical events such as the lives of holy and profane men to illustrate doctrine and practice. Catechisms stressed discipline, especially the Ten Commandments. Presbyterians and Episcopalians became leaders in articulating the positive aspects of Christianizing slaves, by publishing catechisms, sermon books, and penning suggestions on the methods to be employed in this endeavor. In 1850, James Thornwell, a prominent Charleston Presbyterian minister succinctly capsulized the most "progressive" attitudes among clergy regarding how well the teachings of Jesus suited the condition of people in bondage. Thornwell sermonized in support of a separate church building in Charleston for black communicants of all denominations, because "the galleries of the white churches could not contain more than one-fourth of their numbers." Those supporting the enterprise met with strong opposition because the plan brought back memories of the Vesey Conspiracy and its relationship to scripture as perceived by the rebels, away from the watchful eye of whites. But Thornwell counseled that none need be afraid of the lessons of Jesus, "who was no stirrer up of strife, no mover of sedition." On the contrary, insisted Thornwell, the religion

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

● 175 taught by Jesus was "the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order." This religion alone possessed the power to curb passions and to accord each group their rights: "to the laborious, the reward of their industry; to the rich, the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles, the preservation of their honors, and to the princes, the stability of their thrones." Jesus, said Thornwell, did not teach insurrection, anarchy, bloodshed, or revolt against masters. "Christian knowledge inculcates contentment with our lot," he preached, and "renders us comparatively indifferent to the inconveniences and hardships of time." Christian knowledge, persuaded Thornwell, subdued the "passions and prejudices" responsible for endangering the "social economy."[13]

175 797 In 1848 delegates of the Savannah River Baptist Association took definitive action, making Baptists of the Sea Island region among the last to engage in the religious instruction enterprise. Even then only "two or more" missionaries were approved to go among the slaves, and money to support the preachers was solicited not guaranteed. As if planter and congregational opposition were not enough, filling missionary posts also proved a trying task. Ministers often refused to accept the charge. This reluctance can be partly explained by the lack of financial support, which is an index for gauging the degree of earnestness. Contributions were never large, generally ranging from thirty-five to fifty dollars annually, but on several occasions were as low as fifty cents. Not until 1853 did Sea Island slaves receive a missionary through the Association. Yet the cause was not totally lost. The Savannah River Baptist Association succeeded in creating interest in the Sabbath School movement for the young after 1849, and some churches as well as individual planters furthered the Baptist cause through this institution while they spurned organized efforts. Other Baptist slaveholders periodically employed their own missionary, or hired Baptist "exhorters" as overseers.[14]

175 Considering conditions among white Baptist churches during the antebellum era, it is not surprising that so little enthusiasm was expressed over the religious welfare of slaves. Many churches met infrequently, once a month, and shared the same pastor. Often a congregation was without a pastor for whole seasons, and the only services were provided by the Association missionary whenever he had the opportunity. This dearth of spiritual ardor was matched by internal strife in various congregations and general unruliness on the part of members. The missionary was sometimes given the task of settling disagreements which dis-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

rupted a church. He was often unsuccessful. The Savannah River Baptist 175• Association consistently commented on the languid condition of the majority of churches in the 1830s. During the 1840s and 1850s the Association promoted Sabbath Schools not only as a means of instructing slaves, but also to combat the "declension and prevailing coldness" as well as "lack of-grace" in white churches. It is surprising that slaves ever received Christian instruction considering the circumstances of Baptist churches without "grace" or filled with "paranoia" about abolitionists. Yet some planters provided plantation meetinghouses for the slaves especially after 1845. Here African-Americans met among themselves under supervision of some "trusted" black elder. Through these "invisible institutions" slaves received some Christian instruction. More significantly, they used these opportunities to interpose their own interpretations on Protestantism. Nowhere was this development more evident than (797) in the Sea Islands. Congregations there were far ahead of their sister churches in terms of wealth, stability, leadership, and an early though (794) gradual commitment to ostensibly integrating Gullahs into the Christian religion.[15]

Two significant events occurred in the Sea Island region in 1831. First, 175 the presence of Methodist missionaries among the slaves. Second, the 797 appearance of a fiery revivalist named Daniel Baker. Both happenings were determining factors in initiating a "change of heart" among Sea Island Baptists about teaching some Christian doctrines to the Gullahs.

Baptist planters of the Sea Island region laid claim to a tradition of religious dissent that began long before American independence. Some Baptist founders in the region were early disciples of George Whitefield when the established church refused to admit him to the pulpit.[16] Prominent Beaufort District Baptists of the 1830s, such as the Fripps, Fullers, Lawtons, Chaplins, and Robertses, were descendants of pioneer homeseekers, and identified with a legacy of an evangelism older than American Methodism. Given such claims to revivalist tradition and considering the apostolic dictates of the Faith, Baptist planters may well have experienced some degree of guilt and embarrassment as Methodist "knights of the saddle bags" descended upon the Sea Islands to undertake what thier spiritual brethren had neglected.

Further pressure was brought to bear in 1831 and 1832 as Beaufort District quaked under the forceful impact of a revival initiated by a cultivated and spirited evangelist. Daniel Baker was a Southern Presbyte

5

175 rian and former pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Washing-
199 ton, of which both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson were members. He left the Washington Church to accept a pastorship in Savannah and there heavily engaged in evangelical preaching. The impact of Baker's sermons was reportedly felt along the entire seaboard of Georgia and South Carolina. Wherever he preached a steady stream of converts came forth. His was not a mass revival since the seaboard white population was sparse. But hundreds attended the protracted meetings which Baker conducted in "the little sea coast towns and villages" mainly inhabited by planter aristocracy. And his sermons reputedly "moved whole communities." Baker wrote in his autobiography that his South Carolina efforts led to "important results" in places such as Gillisonville, Grahamville, Robertville, May River, and Beaufort. The meetings at Beaufort he deemed "the most remarkable." There was no Presbyterian church so Baker preached alternately in the Baptist and Episcopalian churches. "Oh, what blessed meetings we had!" he wrote. Baker preached three times a day "to full houses," and the numbers "hopefully converted amounted to about eighty."[17]

In regard to the number "hopefully converted" in Beaufort, Baker apparently took only white converts into account. Another section of Baker's autobiography quotes the Episcopal minister as stating that there were "two or three hundred conversions in Beaufort under Mr. Baker's ministry," consisting of "a number of whites," seventy of whom presented themselves for confirmation at the Episcopal church, and "very many blacks," who united with the Baptists.[18] Thus at least some of the slaves from the town of Beaufort participated in the Baker revival.

17 At the time of Baker's appearance the two houses of worship in Beaufort were described by one of thier "eminent laymen" as "little better than masonic lodges." The churches had the form of godliness but were "destitute of its power." The "layman" observed that "frequenters of the race-course and the theater found their places at the communion table," and that not even the duelist was excluded. Baker was credited with stimulating religious enthusiasm among "decadent" members of the planter class. An observer of the 1831 revival noted that in at least one instance derision of Baker's mission was transformed into contrition. Notice of Baker's services was sent from house to house. The announcement was received at a whist club during their weekly meeting. The notice was read aloud "amidst shouts of merriment." The group ridiculed the reli-

17 in the Sea Island District inspired more attention toward the spiritual welfare of the Gullahs.

•175 797 Daniel Baker's conversion of Richard Fuller in 1831 had significant implications for Christianizing efforts in the Sea Islands. Under Fuller's ministration the Beaufort Church became the largest, most influential congregation in the Sea Island region. Fuller was greatly moved by the reformer's cry to instruct the slaves and was largely responsible for the comparatively phenomenal growth of the Beaufort Baptist Church.[23]

Richard Fuller was a member of the Fuller-Middleton family, longtime residents of Beaufort District. Fuller's personal holdings consisted of plantations on St. Helena and Cat Islands as well as the mainland. At the time of Baker's appearance in Beaufort, Fuller was a wealthy, well-established, Harvard-educated attorney not yet thirty years old. His parents were Baptists, but at birth Fuller was baptized an Episcopalian. Following his "moving" conversion in 1831, Fuller was rebaptized and he united with the local Episcopal church. But, not finding the "peace of mind" nor the "inspiration" he sought, Fuller was baptized again, this time in the Beaufort River, and as a Baptist. As further evidence of his reformation, Fuller immediately relinquished his lucrative law practice and declared himself called to the gospel ministry. In 1832 he was ordained a Baptist minister and accepted pastorship of Beaufort Church, where he remained until 1847. He then accepted a call to the Seventh Street Baptist Church in Baltimore where he was pastor until 1871.[24]

175 567 797 Late in his career, Fuller confided to a friend that when he was initially "called" to the ministry he resolved to confine his labors wholly to the slave population. But, Fuller claimed, he "was prevented by the hand of God." Although he did not devote his entire career to religious instruction of bondspeople, as a minister in Beaufort Fuller spent much of his time to preaching among the Gullahs. The attention and interest he gave represented a turning point in the religious history of Sea Island blacks. The immense African-American population, previously ignored by Baptist planters and churches, gradually, under the administration of Fuller, became objects of concern from a spiritual standpoint. As white [795] membership increased, slaves of these new members were baptized and the Beaufort Church became a training ground for black Baptist converts at liberty to attend services. Fuller insisted that galleries be given over to the bulging black membership. A special lecture room was also added where black church members could be instructed before and after Sun-

175
223
567

day worship as well as during the week. Slaves attending Beaufort Church were sometimes instructed by their own masters who were also prominent church elders. Aside from scripture, church discipline and rules of conduct were emphasized.[25]

As a Sea Island planter and a favorite son of the community, Fuller could combat some resistance to religious instruction of the slaves. By 1840 he had organized a system of preaching places on the Islands where he or a member of his staff made periodic appearances. Establishment of these preaching stations furthered the Baptist cause, leading to "conversion" of many plantation slaves. While pastor of Beaufort Church, Fuller was respected among the whites as a sincere, inspiring, and effective minister. He was also popular with the Gullahs. Fuller was one of the very few planters who openly denounced the separation of families. He considered this morally wrong and against biblical law. He refused to sell or divide his bondspeople, an important consideration to black people accustomed to seeing "pious" planters disregard slaves' familial ties at a moment's notice. In addition to observing (like a true patriarch) this fundamental principle of humanity, Fuller adopted an evangelical style of preaching said to be filled with "earnestness, fire and melting pathos." An associate who often heard Fuller preach wrote:

175
797

> His whole mien was imposing. When he rose to address a congregation, his very attitude was that of a man conscious at once that he had a most important message to deliver, and that he had the capacity to deliver it worthily. . . . His voice was singularly sweet and of great compassion and managed with such exquisite skill, that his softest whispers were distinctly heard in the remotest parts of a crowded congregation; while his loudest tones did not jar upon the ears of those nearest the speaker. His gestures were always graceful. . . . He subdued others, because, in the loftiest flights of his imagination and the deepest feelings of his heart, he was master of himself.[26]

Apparently a skillful and arousing speaker, Fuller captured the imagination of the bondspeople, something few white preachers could do. The Gullahs also viewed him as a kind and sensitive man whose "good works" were equal to his "faith." No doubt these considerations explain the eagerness with which he was received and accepted by the Gullahs as a preacher and for the warmth with which they remembered him to the Northern missionaries during the course of the Civil War. The Gullahs even created a stanza for Fuller in one of their most revered spirituals: "Massa Fuller on de Tree ob Life, Roll, Jordan, Roll."

175 567 797 [795] After Fuller left for Baltimore in 1847, attempts to bring slaves into Sea Island churches were not persued with the same enthusiasm. But in 1853, through efforts of the Savannah River Baptist Association missionary and an energetic new pastor at Beaufort Church named I.M.C. Beaker, Gullahs again became a focal point of concern. During the last seven antebellum years, slave baptisms in the Beaufort River again became frequent. A record was set in 1857 when 220 slaves received into the Church "were all on Sunday morning . . . Baptized by our Pastor . . . in 1 hour and 45 minutes and in the presence of a very large number of spectators." The total number of slaves baptized for that year was also a record—556.[27]

The first phase of Baptist efforts to Christianize slaves, from 1830 to 1845, roughly corresponds to a period of growth in Sea Island churches and, most spectacularly, the Beaufort Church. In 1833, Beaufort District had a slave population of around 30,861. For that year the nine largest Beaufort District Baptist congregations reported a total membership of around 4,419. That was over two and one-half times the total membership of the remaining twenty-eight Baptist churches in the Savannah River Association (whose combined memberships was only 1,666). We cannot be certain about the number of slaves these figures represent, since racial designations were not yet in use. But the majority of these church members were slaves, a hypothesis supported by membership returns of later years for which there are racial designations.[28]

175 795 794 By 1845, when the Southern Baptist Convention was organized, the largest Beaufort District Baptist churches at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River and Hilton Head for instance, reported a total membership of around 5,914. Most of this increase is attributable to slave baptisms and over half of those to Beaufort Church. Total membership for all forty-three churches within the Association was about 8,529. This trend indicates that the most active area of religious instruction was in the Sea Islands. St. Helena Parish, with a slave population of 6,740 in 1845, had two Baptist churches. While St. Helena's Brick Baptist Church was accessible to the several thousand slaves living there, Beaufort Church drew its membership for a forty-mile radius that included six Sea Islands and parts of the mainland. The adult slave population in Beaufort District was around 22,000 in 1840, out of a total slave population of 29,682.[29] Thus approximately one in every five slaves in Beaufort District was a Baptist church member. [162] [567]

175 777 794 In the latter and generally most vigorous period of the movement for Christian instruction from 1845 to 1861, Baptist involvement continued to center in areas where evangelizing efforts were already in progress, such as the Sea Islands. Although several Lowcountry churches did increase their black membership during the period, such augmentation was numerically insignificant. Most membership returns submitted to the Savannah River Baptist Association had racial designations by 1848. These reports indicate that a few individual Sea Island churches maintained fairly large memberships and Beaufort Church had unusual increases. But the majority of Baptist churches in the Lowcountry south of Charleston seemed to fall short of the goal of religious conversion of bondspeople. Actually neither Sea Island Baptists, Baptist missionaries, nor lukewarm Baptist churches adequately "served the spiritual needs" of so large a black population. In 1859, as civil conflict approached, the total black membership of the Baptist churches within the jurisdiction of the Savannah River Baptist Association was not yet 7,000.[30] In some ways these figures are unimpressive, but they nevertheless demonstrate black exposure to Christianity through Baptist efforts. We can also surmise that black church members were the best conduits of the faith in the slave quarters. When this is considered, Baptist influence is even more manifest, for few Gullahs actually joined the Methodist church. 175 777 567 Most Gullahs "converted to Christianity" or even adherents of it accepted the denomination of their masters, a preference that continued even after bondage. This raises questions about the nature of Baptist activity among the Gullahs, and why the denomination of slaveholders so strongly appealed to slaves.

175 567 Superficially, Lowcountry planters appear to represent "paternalism" par excellence. Those "young and refined" citizens of the Sea Island communities who claimed Daniel Baker for their spiritual patron included such men as C. C. Pinckney, William H. Barnwell, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Stephen Elliott, and Richard Fuller. These men represented the quintessence of South Carolina Lowcountry aristocracy, dominating landholdings and counting their slaves by the hundreds. 175 Beaufort was the chief place of residence for most Baptist planters. But some of the stauncher Baptists such as the Lawtons, Robertses, Bosticks, and Nortons shunned "iniquitous" recreations offered by the Sea Island resort town and created their own manorial splendor at Robertville, Lawtonville, and Gillisonville. These planters reportedly excelled in erudition

as well as wealth, and during the Civil War Northerners occupying their homes found extensive libraries. Sons were often educated at Harvard, at Princeton ("very popular" because "no Negroes" were ever allowed), and Yale. Daughters were sometimes taught refinement of manners and grace of carriage at exclusive Northern finishing schools. According to a contemporary who resided in Beaufort, nowhere on the continent was "family hauteur and pride carried to such extremes," and nothing in the largest cities North or South could "equal the display of carriages and equipages with the servants in livery" seen on a pleasant afternoon in Beaufort, "when the mothers and daughters of these cotton lords took their accustomed airing."[31]

An Island planter's occupation, then, was both remunerative and often conducted by proxy. And, since his education was usually unsurpassed by others in the state, the question may be asked, what did he consider his *raison d'être?* According to Jenkins Mikell of Edisto Island, the planter seldom pondered this question. "He followed the path of least resistance and enjoyed life after his own idea." "But," Mikell added, "if forced to be specific," the planter "would assert that politics and the Church stood out most prominently and more generally occupied his attention than other things. It was either one or the other—sometimes both at one time." Some of South Carolina's most illustrious statesmen and clergymen hailed from the Sea Islands. Naturally, since the wealth of these individuals directly depended upon continuation of their "peculiar institution," they were bound to its protection and defense against governmental encroachment. The Sea Islands, then, were also a hotbed of Southern nationalism and the home of the most vociferous South Carolina fire-eaters. When statesmen met in 1861 to discuss and vote on secession from the Union, one tempestuous Sea Island patriot declared impatiently, "If South Carolina does not secede from the Union, Edisto will!"[32]

The concern manifested toward religious matters by some of these "first families" of the South was noticed by Northern observers during the Civil War. The deserted mansions "were generally found strewn with religious periodicals, mainly Baptist magazines."[33] Implicitly then, the letter if not the spirit of Christianity occupied the minds of these slaveholding Baptists at one time or another. And, in keeping with their aristocratic affectations, some probably had an esoteric flair for leisurely contemplation of theology and doctrine. More significant for the slaves, some planters practiced a self-fashioned mode of paternalism through religious instruction. The example of Richard Fuller is a case in point.

As a large slaveholder, Northern-educated lawyer, and Southern Baptist preacher, Fuller's position on slavery was curious and filled with the dialectical trappings that reveal the nature of paternalism as a self-serving, conscience-assuaging ideology of a dominant group. Fuller upheld the right to hold slaves and used scripture to support his arguments. Yet he spoke out against slavery in the United States and against some evils of the system, insisting that its existence be limited. Like other slaveholders such as Henry Clay, Fuller was an avid member of the American Colonization Society. The stated goal of the Society was colonization of free blacks in Africa. Many Southerners such as C. C. Pinckney abhorred the organization, seeing it as seeping antislavery sentiment. Yet others, such as Fuller, supported the scheme mainly as a vehicle to channel reformist evangelical zeal, since black Americans could convert Africans, and as a public example of concern for black welfare. In 1851 at one of the organization's most important meetings, both Fuller and Clay addressed the members. Fuller's statements attracted wide national attention, temporarily alienating him from many of his slaveholding friends and former white parishioners in Beaufort. Fuller lauded missionary efforts among slaves in the South and condemned the North for its impatience. His address, though certainly not abolitionist, seemed antislavery in tone, and much of it was directed at fellow slave masters. Fuller stated that "we of the South" should make concessions, and candidly admit that while slavery "enriches the individual, it impoverishes the State." Slavery, said Fuller, fostered indolence and luxury, "the bane of governments." Additionally, he appealed, the South should consider, as "honest," "Christian" men, "whether, when Jesus Christ says 'What, therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,' husbands and wives ought to be separated; whether labor ought to be received without compensation." Recalling a conversation he once had with recently deceased John C. Calhoun, the latter insisted that planters did "pay fair wages for the labor of our slaves." But it was not "the calculation," said Fuller, nor "the dollars and cents: it is the principle I am contending."[34]

But several years earlier, while still pastoring in Beaufort, Fuller had engaged in a dialogue with Francis Wayland, President of Brown University. Fuller argued in favor of slavery from the Old Testament and

175 while he found nothing explicit to support slavery in the New Testament, Fuller maintained that this silence was tacit approval. "What God sanctioned in the Old Testament and permitted in the New," Fuller proclaimed, "cannot be a sin."[35]

Also, despite Richard Fuller's "professed" views against slavery, he maintained his plantations after leaving Beaufort for Baltimore. During the Civil War he was loyal and remained in Baltimore. Following the outbreak of the war he went to Washington, D. C., and called upon Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, to inquire about his rights "in regard to his plantations and slaves in Port Royal." Chase wrote:

> Told him that, as a loyal man, he was Proprietor of the land. "How about the Negroes?" he asked. "They were free," I replied. He thought his right to them was the same as his right to the land. Told him opinion would differ on that point, and that, for one, I should never consent to the involuntary reduction to slavery of one of the Negroes who had been in the service of the Government. Told him further what I thought of the character of the rebellion and its results, etc.

The conversation concluded with Fuller indicating his willingness "to acquiesce in the experiments of the Government," but having "grave doubts" about the ability of the Gullahs to behave responsibly as free people. Fuller quoted Machiavelli's saying, "Next to making free men slaves, it is most difficult to make slaves free men."[36]

Richard Fuller may have been antislavery in "principle" and in theory. But in reality he upheld American slavery as a white man's right. Yet, [797] while his theoretical position on slavery was ambiguous, he was unwavering in efforts to expose the black population in St. Helena Parish to Christianity and in his support of such endeavors all over the state.

175 797 At a glance, it appears that during the apex of the antebellum era, Sea Island Baptists combined the qualities of material wealth and an exhibition of missionary zeal. The small white memberships and disproportionately large black galleries ostensibly imply that in the wake of paranoia about abolitionists and general inertia among most Lowcountry churches, Sea Island Baptist planters were exemplary in Christianizing slaves. Yet to what extent did Sea Island Baptist planters actually further the cause of Christianity among the Gullahs? And, insofar as they did, were such teachings instituted out of an acknowledgment of Christian duty? Without denying the individual motivation and limited sense of moral obligation expressed by one such as Richard Fuller, Baptist con-

175
797

cern for religious instruction was mainly superficial. Possibly some wished to ease a sense of conscience aroused by the 1831 revival and to neutralize criticism from Northern quarters. But more significantly, Baptist interest in Christianizing the Gullahs was prominent where doctrine might be a means of exerting influence over personal behavior and social relationships to further the existing status quo.

"*Christian*" *Slaves*

17
567
794
797

Mostly town slaves and house servants were first accepted into Baptist churches. Certainly, in the early phase of the movement, these African-Americans had access to the "privilege" of becoming church members. Since Beaufort was the chief place of residence for Sea Island planters, their retinue of house servants had the opportunity, and sometimes were forced to attend Baptist worship. As church membership increased, the next group of slaves in plantation hierarchy, the artisans, were also represented. Field workers were not completely excluded from the churches, especially Beaufort Church. When a slaveholder and his family joined a church, his slaves might be required to join as well. Richard Fuller, for instance, was diligent about accepting his slaves into Beaufort Church and encouraged this among his slaveholding neighbors. Yet few Sea Island Baptists allowed their field slaves the mobility needed to attend preaching places. This rule must have applied particularly to slaves wishing to attend church service in places like Beaufort or Bluffton that necessitated leaving the Islands or vicinity of the plantations for long periods of time and usually required some means of water transportation provided by the planter. Furthermore, these country churches were modest-sized structures, built mainly with the small white population in mind. Not all churches even had galleries. Among those that did, once the more "privileged" slaves and house servants were seated, there was obviously no room for the field hands. According to one former Beaufort slave:

> Didn't have no colored churches. De drivers and de overseers, de house-servants, de bricklayers and folks like dat'd go to de white folk's church. But not de field hands. Why dey couldn't have all got in de church. My marsa had three or four hundred slaves, himself. And most of the other white folks had just as many and more.

17
567
794

Even with favored slaves, concepts of white spiritual egalitarianism did not go far. Beaufort whites insisted in 1841 that the inside stairs leading plication" of slaves for "tickets to get baptized," and join the Baptist 17 Church. The slaves derived no Christian benefit from their association 567 with the church, said Field, but used it as "a place of resort." Field 794 "suspected an influence decidedly contrary to vital godliness," but added that it could not be prevented "unless I resided on the place myself."[39]

If the benne seed ritual is an example,[40] these societies had some characteristics 175 similar to African associations. It is later argued that the black 567 societies were, like the African societies, units of organization that regulated 794 conduct and served to integrate individuals into the plantation community. Within these societies Gullahs practiced their own version of Christianity, and created their religious folk-culture. Baptist planters apparently intended to alter the "corrupt" elements within these slave associations and use them to promote a Christianity, suitable to their own ends. Slaves' familiarity with concepts of secret society, membership, 175 and social regulations suggest a relationship to African institutions that 178 Christian ideas of a community of believers reinforced. Like the formation 567 of Gullah language, the syncretic evolution of African Christianity 794 was a gradual process. It began when diverse African groups framed a spiritual commonality and belief system into which Christianity, at various times and with varied intensity, was incorporated, reformulated and appropriated. For many years, Gullahs heard of "Christianity" mainly from black rather than white teachers, and this contributed to the persistence of African norms, thought, and ceremony. But, as the benne seed ritual suggests, the presence of black "Christians" in the slave quarters undoubtedly produced debates, challenges, acknowledgments and selective adaptation even before 1830.

While Methodist missionaries were "suspicious" of the black societies, 175 for Baptists they were a medium for religious service and discipline among 567 the slaves. Thus the black societies served one function for slaves and 794 embodied another for slave owners. At Beaufort and other churches, 797 slaves professing conversion as Baptists had to unite with a society. Beaufort Church, with its large black membership and extensive records, illustrates how whites expected these societies to function. At first black leaders had charge of the societies, but subject to the superintendence of a resident planter. The black leaders reported at the monthly church meeting. According to the Minutes of Beaufort Church for November 11, 1840:

> 175 567 794 797 The Committee on discipline are requested to obtain if possible the presence of all the colored elders, at their meetings; as from them and them alone [the elders] must they expect to receive legitimate reports, of Deaths, the prosperity of their societies or backsliding members.[41]

When societies first came under jurisdiction of the Church each one bore the name of their black leader in charge. But by 1850 societies were under governance of a white brother living on the island and the organizations named after their locations. Rather than attend the white church, the black membership was directly affiliated with black societies for purposes of "religious instruction and worship."[42] Thus, black societies were the vehicle through which the Gullahs as Baptists participated in the Christian experience.

175 567 794 Although white brethren ultimately were ostensible leaders of black societies, the structure and supervision of the organizations still provided the slaves with some autonomy. Ideally the white brother in charge of a given society held monthly meetings with society members, scrutinized the slaves' activities, conducted religious exercises, and examined candidates for church membership. Each white brethren was assisted by one or more blacks (depending upon the size of the society) called "watchmen," "elders," or "deacons," appointed by the church at the suggestion of the "brother in charge." In reality, however, the black deacon continued to direct the society. He was responsible for "general watchcare" over the society, and conducted society meetings "to inquire into and report . . . cases for discipline that may come to his attention." He was also at liberty "to hold meetings for worship and exhortation . . . on such plantations as he may have received special permission," and to administer communion. The black elder was in turn aided by "help" on each plantation with a sufficient number of society members. The help supervised members on the plantation, held prayer meetings, and reported weekly to the elder, naming those slaves desiring to join the society. According to a former Sea Island slave, a black exhorter would preach "to de field hands down in de quarters. . . . Meet next day to de Marsa's and turn in de report, how many pray, how many ready for baptism and all like dat."[43]

175 567 (621) Gullahs had a measure of control in terms of internal structure and worship within black societies. How they transferred that into community cohesion is discussed later. Planters primarily wanted plantation discipline preached, breaches of discipline punished, and corrective retri-

175 • 567 [154)
175 567 346

bution administered in the name of Christian commandments. Beyond that superintendence, slaveholders spent little energy on Christian doctrine. Planters probably welcomed opportunities to provide slaves with a "safe" outlet for releasing pent-up hostilities and emotions. After 1845, many plantations had rude structures where the Gullahs could "hold prays" on weekday evenings as well as Sundays. Northern missionaries were appalled at the condition of the "Prays" or Praise Houses. "The owner furnished a better stable for his horses than a house of worship for these sons and daughters of the King of Kings," wrote Mansfield French from Port Royal.[44] Yet for Gullahs the Praise House was a plantation community hall where they related secular experiences, directed their religious life, openly expressed among each other their innermost frustrations, longings and expectations.

175 567 794

The white brother in charge of a society was generally a large slaveholder sometimes with several plantations on the Island he superintended. In other cases a Baptist overseer, but slaveholder in his own right, was assigned to a society. The names of Fripp, Chaplin, Barnwell, Baynard, and Fuller dominate Beaufort Church Minutes as "brethren in charge" of black societies. Most of these planters rarely spent long periods of time on their island plantations, preferring the comforts of their Beaufort townhouses. Most knew little about their slaves' activities (except house slaves) unless some depredation was committed and reported. In the early period of church superintendence of societies, white brethren were lax about meeting with the organizations, often leaving this responsibility with the black elders. In 1842 the Beaufort Church Business reminded white brethren of their duties:

> Resolved . . . that *Brother Chaplin be requested to attend himself in person as the Church deems it important that the Brethren appointed and responsible be themselves instructers of the societies confided to them.*

The Church had difficulty retaining a white brother in charge and resignations were frequent. Most Baptists apparently did not want the responsibility of overseeing black church members.[45]

175 567 797

Thus, black societies primarily accommodated the slave membership of large Baptist churches with little or no Christian instruction being imparted by white society leaders. The other sources of exposure to white Christian teachings came from Methodist missionaries, from preaching places established by Richard Fuller (though supplied less rigorously after

175 he left), and late-coming Baptist missionaries who brought the last surge
567 of slave baptismal activity in the mid-1850s. Apparently little screening
797 occurred prior to uniting with Baptist churches, except examinations imposed upon the slaves by black leadership. Slaves were accepted into the
[795] Church from the societies, and admission was based on a profession of faith, evidence of "good character" from the slavemaster, and recommen-
[794] dation from the white brother in charge, who relied on intelligence received from the black elder.[46]

195 This lack of a meaningful conviction to teach Christianity raises the question of why some slaveholding Baptists accepted such large numbers
567 of slaves into the churches at all. Neither a revival spirit nor Northern
795 agitation fully explain the motivation. But activities of the Church Com-
797 mittee on Discipline perhaps express the manner in which Baptists expected Christianity to best serve them as slaveholders. Their change in attitude reflected the general shift away from paranoia about Christianizing slaves. After 1845 many believed that practical Christianity could work for the slave system. And although the majority of Gullahs had little or no contact with the Baptist church itself, church members felt the restraining arm of the faith through the Committee on Discipline.

175 Church discipline is an old concept, dating as far back as the sixteenth century. Early Baptist discipline was similar to the English Separatists' 1696 "Confessions of Faith," and integral to views of Christian fellowship for believers. This spiritual and communal sense revolved around creating a "true and orderly gospel church," with members conducting personal behavior according to Old Testament biblical tenants. Later, London Baptists' "Confessions of Faith" reflected concern for "order and discipline," and this was emphasized by their American counterpart, the Philadelphia Baptist Association, when in 1742 they composed their confessions and annexed a particular discipline code to it. In 1769 the Charleston Baptist Association adopted the Philadelphia model. Not all, probably not most, American Baptist churches had explicit discipline references in their confessions although discipline was a reality in the churches. But Charleston Baptists and their Lowcountry congregational extensions were products of the Calvinist-Baptist tradition as is reflected in their patent emphasis on discipline, and in other ways previously discussed.[47]

Nineteenth-century Southern and frontier evangelical congregations fostered a sense of community through worship, revivals, camp meet-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

ings, prayer meetings, and discipline. Church discipline kept alive the 175 ●
"heavenly pattern" which each church personified. This "city set on a hill" meted out censure and excommunication regularly to offending members who paled its self-image of purity and piety. As the country expanded, church discipline was used to control the raw excesses of new communities struggling against such "immoralities" as "drinking, fornication, gambling, dueling and profanity." Evangelical churches grew increasingly more powerful and espoused an increasingly conservative theology in the South and perhaps elsewhere. This trend toward religious conservatism was tied, though not exclusively, to political and social developments in the South, most notably to slavery. An obvious manifestation of this was the national polarization of church denominations.[48] In the Lowcountry, another significant and more immediate expression of efforts to protect the existing social and political order through religion is found in the function of discipline committees on plantations. Every Lowcountry church examined for this study with a large black membership had such a committee. The nature of this committee's concern with the slaves' activities reveals how Baptists intended to make Gullahs "good Christians" mainly insofar as Christianity made them better slaves. (795)
The work of the Committee on Discipline in the largest Sea Island church amplifies this thesis.

Once attention focused on slave conversion, the most pressing church 175
business was discipline of slave members. The Committee existed pre- 795
viously, but was reorganized and restructured in 1840, and its function 244
broadened. According to the Minutes, the disciplinary body governed 567
behavior of all church members, "both bond and free," but was specifically charged with looking into breaches of conduct committed by bondspeople. This committee of eight brethren investigated a few white cases, mostly involving social lapses. But in the "inquiry and investigation" of slaves, the "Committee on Discipline" had "broad" but "conservative powers."[49]

As with white "brethren in charge" of black societies, prominent Sea Island slaveholders, such as Benjamin Chaplin, Saxby Chaplin, William Fuller, James Fripp, and Edward Fripp dominated discipline of the Gullahs. Furthermore, members of the Discipline Committee might also double as superintendents of a black society. Sea Island planter Benjamin Chaplin, for example, was a member of the disciplinary body and also superintendent of the Beaufort Society. Noted for cruelty to his

•175 795 794 (567) slaves and intemperance, even Chaplin's peers admitted that his "violent temper" which was "so entirely ungovernable," disqualified him as a religious teacher.[50]

175 795 794 688 567 Discipline Committees met once a month. Prior to 1845 black elders met at the church with the Committee and reported on the state of religion in their societies. Later, this procedure was discontinued. Instead, white brethern in charge of a given society met with black members one Sunday in the month and subsequently reported to the Discipline Committee, providing a list of recommendations for action. The responsibilities of the brother in charge were elaborated in the Minutes of Beaufort Church. Should any "private or personal offense be reported," he could take such action as "he may think proper." If the offense was of a "more serious character, involving immorality," it was the duty of the brother in charge to carefully investigate "the facts," report these to the church at its regular discipline meeting, and offer his recommendations. The white brother was also "authorized and expected to examine applicants for restoration" of their membership, "and if satisfied," to recommend action to the church.[51]

Thus only the "more serious" offenses got to the church discipline level, and all manner of "lapses in moral conduct" and plantation "crimes" were considered serious enough to warrant censure by the church. Slaves were suspended and excommunicated as often for "crimes" against plantation authority as for "moral" breaches. Frequently mentioned were offences such as "killing beef," "hog stealing," "barn burning" and simply "theft." Additionally, flight appeared consistently as a reason for excommunication. In 1841 for instance, bondswoman Betty was "suspended for running away," and the same action was taken against Tom for "harboring above Betty." Other reasons for excommunication were "impudence," "Sabbath breaking," "fornication" and "adultery." Occasionally slaves requested "permission to marry."[52]

The word of plantation authority subjected a slave to church discipline. As in a white court of law, a bondsperson's word was worth nothing in a white church. Monthly society discipline meetings were public. They were meant to dishonor and humiliate the slaves before each other, to admonish others against "wrong doing," and to prostrate the "guilty" before "church" law. The Gullahs were confronted with their "sins" by their earthy masters as they would face a "heavenly father" in the future. Interests of both "masters" were represented as the same so a crime against

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

a slaveholder was a "sin" in the eyes of God. This outlook was pressed 175
on children who, after 1845, sometimes received instruction on Sunday 795
mornings in the form of oral catechism, recitation of the Ten Command- 794
ments, and prayers. Rebecca Grant recalled that in Beaufort her former 688
owners "wouldn't miss de catechism," and they [the children], "was taught 567
they must be faithful to the Missus and Marsa's work like you would to your heavenly Father's work." Slaves on St. Helena Island discussed "Good Billy" (William) Fripp, a Baptist master who was referred to as "good," not because of his benevolence toward his slaves, but for his avowed piety and strict sense of biblical discipline. According to the Gullahs this "leading Baptist" carried his Bible out to the fields, showed slaves "Moses' law," and then flogged them "accordin'."[53]

Baptist slaveholders applied selected scriptures to the Gullahs' daily life struggle. Planters hoped a general spirit of contrition, via a "fear of God," would prevail in the slave quarters and subvert independent thought and action. They viewed discipline meetings as having a purgative effect on the Gullahs and defeating their efforts to resist the most degrading aspects of bondage. Double jeopardy existed for these black church members. If discovered committing acts against slaveholding interests, they suffered bodily punishment. But worse perhaps was expulsion from black society, the Gullahs' primary source for freedom of expression. An excommunicated or suspended church member would receive no pass to attend a preaching place or "society" or be allowed to "hold prays." Slaveholders tried using Christianity to exercise psychological dominance over the minds of Gullahs as they employed brute force to maintain physical control. No other spiritual activity detracted from or competed with these religious tribunals. When they occurred, plantation authority insisted on the slaves' undivided attention. From the Beaufort (797)
Church Minutes we find that even the Methodist missionary's limited activities had to revolve around these assemblages:

> The Pastor to write to the Rev. Mr. Moore [Methodist Missionary] and request him to appoint any other Sabbath than the first in the month to preach on Ladies Island—as that is the day appointed for the discipline of that Society attached to this Church.[54]

White Baptists' use of church discipline to undermine the Gullahs' 175
active indignation and struggle against bondage is evident when consid- 795
ering the nature of the "sins" of which black church members were found 794
685

175 795 794 685

"guilty." Theft, for instance, brought many Gullahs before disciplinary tribunals. Of course slaves did steal for consumptive purposes, obviously because provisions were often insufficient and monotonous. To keep cotton at maximum yield, planters sacrificed cultivation of food staples for their workers. Provision acreage was not determined by the slave community's size, but by the numbers of food-acres workers could attend while working cotton. Sam Mitchell, a former bondsman on one of John Chaplin's Ladies Island plantations, considered his master one of the more tolerable slaveholders. Yet Mitchell recalled that slaves received only a weekly peck of corn except at potato-digging time when they also received potatoes. Sam Polite, of John Fripp's plantation on St. Helena Island, also remembered a grim picture of subsistence:

> On Sattiday night every slabe dat wuks gits peck of corn and pea, and sometimes meat and clabber. You nebber see any sugar, neider coffee in slabery. You has straw in your mattress but dey gib you blanket. Ebery year in Christmas month you gits fur or eider fibe yaa'd cloth. . . . You wears hit winter en summer, Sunday en ebery day. You don't git no coat.[33]

175 685 673 181

Understandably, Gullahs felt no particular bond toward a "Thou shalt not steal" edict despite supposed spiritual and assured physical reprisals. Certainly the Gullahs realized the sham of such dictates given their peculiar circumstances and oppression. Still Gullahs were not immoral on the subject of theft. Among themselves they took a serious attitude toward theft, considering it a breach of trust. Yet Gullahs felt no compunction about such acts directed toward the slave system. In the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Interviews, conducted in 1863, Robert Smalls and Harry McMillan, two soldiers, Sea Island residents and former bondsmen, explained the slaves' attitude toward theft. They testified that while the majority of Gullahs stole from their masters and deceived them, these slaves would not steal from each other and were truthful in their dealings with one another. During the Civil War a white officer of the First South Carolina Volunteers told Charlotte Forten, a black Northerner, that he never saw a regiment where men were so honest. "In many camps the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here," he said. "They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." Similarly, Laura M. Towne wrote in her diary: "The men and women come crowding here at all times begging to be allowed to buy clothing,

and though they stand about for hours in the sun, we have never missed 175
the slightest thing."[56] 685

In the benne seed ritual, Gullahs dealt with theft in a spiritual context, 673
under the guise of the Baptist faith. But the moral judgment was the 181
opposite of Christianity. "Sin" was not upon the slave who stole from
the master, but the individual who "divulged" the act. Gullahs possessed
a keen sense of communal morality which, in this regard, was not subverted
by dogmatic features of Christianity. While stealing from "Maussa,"
was a sin, it was wrong—that is, against elements of collective interests
and values—to steal from a fellow slave and hence betray community
confidence. Gullahs extended their moral philosophy further than race
or condition however, by refusing to steal from whites simply because
they were white. But, the Gullahs were not naive. Their shrewd analysis 175
of justice helped them distinguish between friend and oppressor even 685
among white Northern "missionaries." And some white Northern Baptist 673
ministers sent to the Sea Islands during the Port Royal experiment 797
were more avaricious than cotton agents. One Reverend Phillips, on full 181
salary from a missionary organization, also drew a salary from the government 794
as a superintendant of plantations, and was provided with "house-rent
and rations." Still, Phillips "demanded," from St. Helena Island
Gullahs, "half-a-dollar from every church member for the half year ending
January 1." Since some one thousand blacks on St. Helena, claimed
membership in Brick Baptist Church, Phillips expected to collect quite a
sum. But the Gullahs refused to pay. Other ministers "of like kidney"
were dismissed for "lying" and for "stealing" contributions sent to the
Gullahs by Northern congregations. On one occasion, Gullahs discovered 175
that James McCrea, a minister representing the American Missionary 797
Association was cheating them. They refused to attend McCrea's 794
religious meetings and refused to labor in the cotton fields he supervised.
Likewise, when some government cotton agents on St. Helena charged 181
over 100 percent more for store items than was being charged in Beaufort,
these stores were broken into "and robbed of a good deal of clothing."[57]

Flight, another problem continually plaguing Sea Island slaveholders 17
and punished by both church and state, was usually provoked by some 567
extreme act of cruelty, or gross injustice. Sometimes slaves left because
of a strong desire to visit a loved one. Gullahs rarely ran away with 181
intentions of "going North" for instance. Aside from the near impossi-

lak white man's," that is, with no marks of the whip. "Talk o' lick um 17
sar?" answered one slave when queried about floggings, "yes, sar, nebber 567
did noffin but lick um sar." He insisted that they were whipped when they didn't work and "when we work, hard lick um all same sar." A "devil" for cruelty was Alviro Fripp who "before he got religion use to cuss and cuss and cuss." But when he joined the Baptist church, he could no longer cuss, "so he used to lick 'em instead." The "richest man on St Helena," Edgar Fripp, was reportedly the meanest, and his temper knew no bounds at "full moon." He also worked his slaves all night in (461)
full moon at cotton-picking time. The Gullahs went out of their way to avoid him for if a hat was not tipped quick enough or a bow low enough, Fripp would "lay his horsewhip on them well."[40]

Of the many cases of harsh treatment and sometimes actual barbarity, 175 •
few compared with the 1849 incident recorded by Thomas Chaplin in 567
his Journal. Chaplin's neighbor, James Sandiford, was brought before an inquest of planters regarding the death of his slave, Roger. In examining the slaves' remains, Chaplin wrote that "such a shocking sight never before met my eyes." The slave, a born cripple who "used his knees more than his feet," had been instructed, on a "cold and bitter day," to paddle a boat downriver for oysters and then to cut a bundle of mud marsh. Roger, instructed to return before "high water," did not show up until "ebb tide." But he brought back seven baskets of oysters and a small bundle of marsh. "That," commented Chaplin, "was more than the primest of my fellows would have done." But Sandiford gave Roger thirty lashes for not returning sooner, for not cutting more marsh, and for hollering loudly while being flogged for the first two offenses. Sandiford later eavesdropped on a conversation Roger had in the kitchen with another man. Two versions of the exchange were reported. According to the planter, Roger stated that if he had "sound limbs" he would shoot down a white man before he took a flogging. The man to whom Roger spoke denied this, informing the jurors that Roger said "he would turn his back on them if they shot him down," which Chaplin believed was the truth. Neither comment, in Chaplin's opinion, warranted the punishment Roger received:

> For these *crimes*, this man, this demon in human shape, this pretended Christian, member of the Baptist Church, had this poor cripple Negro placed in an open outhouse, the wind blowing through a hundred cracks, his clothes wet to the waist, without a single blanket & in freezing weather, with his back against the

> 175 567 partition behind him, & fastened on the other side—in this position the poor wretch was left for the night. . . . The wretch [Sandiford] returned to his victim about daylight next morning & found him, as anyone would expect, dead, *choked*, *strangled*, frozen to death, *murdered*.[61]

That same day the jurors reached a verdict—the slave met his death by choking on the chain his master put around his neck, "having slipped from the position in which he was placed." The verdict, Chaplin wrote should have been Roger died from "inhumane treatment," for he not only strangled from trying to disengage himself, hence becoming entangled in the most "shocking position," but was also "stiff dead" from the cold. In Chaplin's "individual" opinion, the act was deliberate, but unpremeditated murder. Whether Chaplin attempted to convince the court of this is unknown. The case, like many such situations was certainly murder, but it behooved slaveholders to protect their position. The "witness" against Sandiford was a slave, the planter was related to at least four of the eight jurors and property rights were supreme in the South. Whatever Chaplin felt in private, his public posture was another matter. Furthermore, five years later, he defended an overseer who killed a runaway slave for stealing watermelons.[62]

175 567 795 Since Sandiford was a Baptist planter, his conduct came before the Beaufort Church where he held membership. The crime apparently occurred on February 18, 1841, and the inquest was held the next day. However, not until March 31 was the incident was brought to the Beaufort Church's attention according to the Minutes. At that time it was discussed at the "Business Meeting," and Sandiford ordered to appear at its next session. On May 5, after receiving "a letter" from Sandiford, his case was "postponed for further consideration." On June 30, "the case of Brother Sandiford was again postponed," and never mentioned after that time. Sandiford's letter was not part of the Minutes and its contents are unknown. Undoubtedly he defended his actions, and though the case probably made him an unpopular communicant, he was never "disciplined." He eventually sold his property and left the region. But more significant, this rawly violent, not to say un-Christian act went uncensored by the Baptist Church.[63] One can imagine what a stir it caused among the slaves, some of whom probably had sanguine expectations that at least ecclesiastical action would be taken. Such occasions reinforced for slaves the fact that even in matters of "Christian" justice, a double standard applied.

175
567

Thus during the Civil War, observers commented on a "total absence of any trace of feudal affection among these people." Even on supposedly "model" plantations with well-built, neat-appearing cabins like the Smith Estate on St. Helena, slaves related tales of white cruelty and black defiance. One slave who did not salute his master "respectfully enough," was ridden "down and over and left in the road until night." When brought back to his cabin, the man was "more dead than alive." Another man helped his wife finish her task after doing his own. He was ordered to flog his wife but refused. For his "obstinance," slaveholder Smith, a "kind" master, gave the man "500 lashes with his own hand." The slave, previously one of the strongest workers, was "completely broken down." Susannah, the sickly but high spirited seamstress on the Oaks plantation, told Laura Towne she once raised pigs but her harsh, domineering master, Baptist patriarch Daniel Pope, forbade this and threatened to shoot them. "'I don't mean impudence Massa, but you cawn't shoot my hogs. What can I do for my children's winter shoes and our salt.'" Pope's slaves were some of the worse off, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-fed. However, Susannah's mistress, though full of threats and scoldings, never lashed her seamstress. Susannah attributed this good fortune to "my pride and principle." Another bondswoman, Celia, told Towne how "Driver John" abused the people and how she once "clutched him by the throat when he whipped her husband and two children."[64]

Gullahs who took "to de swamps and marshes" usually either returned voluntarily or were caught. Sometimes "patterollers" apprehended Gullahs as they returned from or embarked upon some innocent but unauthorized personal errand. Brutal corporal punishment and church censure were certain, yet no amount of flogging, stays in the stocks, ball and chains, sermons, suspensions, or excommunications could daunt the Gullahs' high spirit or their natural inclinations to independence. Incidents of flight express these slaves' refusal to accept their masters' conceptions of moral behavior. Although no reliable avenues of physical escape from bondage existed, Gullahs resisted servitude instinctively, undermining plantation and church discipline. When Northern forces occupied the Sea Islands and masters fled, chances for freedom did seem imminent. Masters endeavored to take as many slaves as possible with them to the mainland, telling the Gullahs that the Yankees intended to carry them to Cuba, take their children, and "knock out der brainses against de treeses." Few Gullahs went willingly with their masters to the main-

● 175 567 land, but many were taken forcibly. Gullahs risked and often lost their lives to flee, telling horror tales of death and suffering inflicted upon anyone suspected of desiring either to remain on the Sea Islands or to escape from the mainland where the planters "refugeed." The fact that they continued to flee under these circumstances is the best testimony to their sense of independence and will to freedom. One such incident was told to Laura M. Towne:

> A woman today just escaped from her owners on the Mainland. She said she had hard work to escape, sleeping in the marsh and hiding all day. She brought away her two little children. Her master had just whipped her oldest son almost to death because he was suspected of trying to join the Yankees.[65]

Although the Battle of Port Royal ended in an easy Northern victory and occupation, the rest of South Carolina remained in Confederate hands. Planters fled the Sea Island region but returned, sometimes under cover of darkness, hoping to force slaves back to the mainland. Blacks and whites picketing the region could not place men at every landing spot and Gullahs lived in apprehension of the slaveholders' return. Susannah's master returned several times, once telling slaves to burn the cotton. "Why for we burn de cotton? Where we get money then for buy clo' sho' and salt?" So instead of burning cotton, they guarded it nightly. Women kept watch and men stood ready to defend their interests when the alarm sounded. At the Oaklands plantation of rebel Baptist Dr. Sams, a field hand named Cupid told Charlotte Forten how his master had daringly returned to St. Helena, risking capture by Northern soldiers, solely to retrieve slaves. Sams attempted to cajole Cupid into cooperation:

> He ordered the people to get all the furniture together and take it to a plantation on the opposite side of the creek, and to stay on that side themselves. "So," said Cupid, "dey could jus' sweep us all in a heap, an' put us in de boat. An' he telled me to take Patience—dat's my wife—an' de chil'en down to a certain pint, an' den I could come back, if I choose. Jus' as if I was gwine to be sich a goat!" added he, with a look and gesture of ineffable contempt. He and the rest of the people, instead of obeying their master, left the place and hid themselves in the woods; and when he [Sams] came to look for them, not one of his "faithful servants" was to be found.[66]

[688] [795] To the end Baptists had "faith" in the "faithfulness" of their slaves, apparently believing that the white church had secured fidelity among the Gullahs. Just how far some whites took this assumption is illustrated

by a statement issued by Prince William Baptist Church as late as May 20, 1865: 175 567

> Found the following coloured members have deserted their homes, the homes of their owners and their church and we fear the Cause of God. They were excommunicated. Boston, Amy, Sallie, Jane, Hannah, Jerry, Ellen, Ransom, Rina, Abraham, Annie, etc. . . .[67] 688 795

In attempting to regiment male-female relations in the slave quarters Baptist slaveholders demonstrated the most hypocrisy and cynicism. Masters separated families by whim and will regardless of religious convictions. Baptist planters sold "Christian" slaves without trying to rationalize such sales in correspondence with the laws of God even when these sales fragmented families. "I give to my son Alec, a son of my wench, boy named Jimmy," wrote Joseph Lawton, the "illustrious" pastor of Black Swamp Church at Robertville where elaborate galleries for slaves and free blacks were constructed in 1824. Slaves lived in constant dread of separation. "Every slave know what, 'I'll put you in my pocket sir,' mean" said former Robertville slave Isaiah Butler. A Northern Baptist published an appeal to slaveholding Baptists which contained an 1835 advertisement taken from a Southern newspaper. It was a notice of an auction telling "its own sad tale," and was a comment on Southern clergymen's rationalization about slavery. The "property" of the estate of "the late Rev. Dr. Furman," prominent Charleston Baptist and supporter of religious instruction for slaves, was for sale. Aside from three lots of land and a library, there were: "27 Negroes, some of them prime, two mules, one horse and an old wagon."[68] 175 567

Yet despite frequent forced family breakups, the church was particularly pharisaical in pretending that slaves were free agents. Gullahs considered "guilty" of "adultery," for example, were excommunicated as a general rule, for according to biblical law it was a sin to "put away" one's wife or husband. This ludicrous issue was debated, however, and the charge rescinded if an individual went before the church via the black watchman or white brother in charge and asked permission to "remarry."[69] Few Gullahs took this step, seeming to prefer exercising their independence insofar as they could within a forced situation. The folly of this supposed violation of scripture was not lost to their intelligence, and they usually ignored such censures. 175 567 795 (688) [684]

Slaves' wishes in choosing a mate were sometimes ignored, and unions 175 567 584

●175 were neither sanctioned in law nor respected by slaveholders. Still Bap-
567 tist churches "devoutly" passed sentence upon Gullahs for "adultery"
584 and "fornication." Perhaps this gesture aimed at giving Gullahs a false send of equality—the same laws for both races regardless of circumstances, as implied by the Savannah River Baptist Association.[70] Possibly this an attempt to demoralize and humiliate—main ingredients of Christianity as taught to slaves. In the interest of "order" and cupidity, masters sometimes denied legitimacy to slaves' emotional inclinations, forcing couples to live together against their will because of convenience and profitability. According to Sam Mitchell, on the Chaplin plantations a slave had to tell the master as soon as he began to "cote." Mitchell added, "If Maussa say 'no you can't marry dat gal' den dat settle it, you can't marry um. He don't lak his slave to marry on nodder puson plantation." In like manner, Harry McMillan testified before the Freedom Inquiry Commission:

> A man saw a young woman and if he liked her he would get a pass from his Master to go where she was. If his owner did not choose to give him the pass he [the master] would pick out another woman and make him [the slave] live with her whether he loved her or not.[71]

Under these oppressive circumstances, where personal preference was ignored, Gullahs understandably had no respect for the church edict establishing rules of conduct about marital status and decisions.

175 Among Gullahs no stigma was attached to sex without marriage as
defined by white society. When asked what proportion of young women
(836) had sexual intercourse prior to marriage, Robert Smalls replied the majority did but "it was not considered an evil thing." When individuals
(583) settled with mates of their choosing he added, such unions were considered binding. Smalls explained male-female relations among the Gullahs:

> (587) If a woman loses her husband she mourns for him and will not marry again for a year and a half, unless she is driven to it by want and must have somebody to
> (765) help her. . . .
>
> . . . You hardly ever find a husband will separate from his wife except he finds
> (586) her going with another man. . . . very few . . . married women are carried away by sexual passion if their husbands can take care of them.[72]

175 Church minutes, then, belie the actual situation by stressing stealth
567 and immorality among the Sea Island region's black population. Gullahs
simply operated under a different moral code. Thomas Chaplin, noted
581
577

how strange it was that his first wife's two maids, who married in 1849, 175
were still on "his place," in 1876. But what to Chaplin was even "stranger," 567
was that these "girls" still "have the very same husbands." Undoubtedly 577
many slaves kept the same mates if circumstances permitted. But Chaplin (581)
was aware of this fidelity only because the slaves were house servants. In a letter to Wendell Phillips Garrison, Laura Towne expressed "indignation" about articles appearing in the *Nation* concerning "immorality among the people of these islands." No one, said Towne, saw more of the islanders than she, "in every relation." Towne gave "an utter denial" of Gullah "immorality." Slavery "did what it could to confuse the minds of slaves with regard to conjugal relations." But added Towne, "a native (581)
fidelity—instinct perhaps," made the slave marriages "sacred in their own eyes and kept together without legal obligations." On the contrary, Towne stated that in her school of large boys and girls, there was "less impropriety—more purity— I may truly say— than is always met with among whites." When "immorality" occurred, it was "strictly dealt with by the church and by general reprobation in social life."[73]

Northern missionaries reported cases of slaves legalizing their unions 175
out of respect for each other and also probably because of their love of 567
ceremony and "title." Many couples having grown old together, went 581
before "de parson." Elizabeth Botume witnessed the occasion of the civil 585
ceremony between of Smart and Mary Washington who lived together for forty years. Smart and Mary shared a great deal through the years, and had nineteen children, only one of whom survived the antebellum years. According to Botume, the couple were very happy over the recognition their enduring relationship was given:

> They walked away together side by side, for the first time endowed with the honorable title of husband and wife. Smart chuckled well when we congratulated him, saying—
> "Him's my wife for sartin, now. Ef the ole hen run away, I shall cotch him sure."
> We thought there was no danger of good Aunt Mary's running away after so many years of faithful service.

During and directly after the Civil War, the situation wrought by slav- 175
ery often led to much unhappiness. Husbands and wives who were sep- 581
arated and forced to take new partners returned to claim their old mates. 585
Baptist discipline did not proscribe slave sales or interfere in any way with the "property" rights of slaveholders. "There was often great dis-

● 175 581 585 appointment," wrote Botume. "Sometimes two men claimed the same woman, whilst she coquetted not a little, evidently disposed to take the one that bid the highest." But, Botume added that this "rarely if ever" occurred when children were involved.[74]

175 795 797 Although the Committee on Discipline within Baptist churches operated as a religious tribunal, efforts to use Christianity to control the Gullahs was largely unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Gullahs seemed almost unanimously to prefer religious affiliation through Baptist membership rather than Methodist. Methodist missionaries displayed a more sincere and human interest in the slaves than their sometimes ruthless, Puritan-oriented Baptist masters. "This seems to be a very unpromising portion of our field of labor," wrote one Methodist missionary, "all owing to the prejudices of the negroes." He continued:

> We cannot . . . find fault with the negroes in this portion of our mission field, for preferring another communion to our own; but our voice will ever be lifted against them, for refusing the bread of life, because, forsooth it comes not to them on a silver salver, or from the hands of one who has not "gone down into or come up out of the water."[75]

The cermonious manner in which Baptists initiated converts into church fellowship impressed the Gullahs. Also, despite Calvinist orientation, Baptists were nonheirarchial, worship was less formal, and church structure less legalistic. But, such considerations were not as significant in influencing Gullah acceptance of the Baptist denomination as were other factors. Baptists slaves exercised a religious autonomy the Methodists would not hear of, and this, coupled with the fact that Sea Island slavery was a quasi-absentee type, contributed to the Gullahs' opportunity to control their own religion, to a point. Moreover, in their endeavor to keep blacks under civil control and to keep them on the plantations, slaveholders allowed spiritual permissiveness by legitimizing already existing black societies and leaving them in the hands of black leaders with only minimal white supervision.[76]

175 793 (554) (797) The extent to which spiritual autonomy influenced Gullah culture and social organization is most evident in the prominence of black leadership. Baptist planters recommended black watchmen who were supposedly "tried and true," and slaveholders apparently had great confidence in those chosen. Such elders were usually staunch church members, but also influential and respected in the quarters. Methodist missionaries were skep-

tical about employing blacks even as helpers. William Capers insisted 175 •
that "helpers" only be "a feeble staff—not leaned upon. They can no 793
more do the missionary's work than a staff can walk." On the other 797
hand, Sea Island Baptists placed much Christian teaching on the shoulders of black leaders. Methodists were consistently confronted with the problems created by this difference in tactical approach. After 1845 most black elders operated with the approval of slaveholders. Some, according to Methodists, had rudimentary knowledge of Christianity. But most, said the missionaries, represented "the very essence of ignorance and superstition." Some slaves came to Methodists' preaching and "precious seasons" and "effusions of tears would ensue." But Methodists lamented that slaves immediately deserted them for "one of their own":

> Let it be known that one of these [slaves] is to preach on such a day and there is such a rush . . . that they may have the pleasure of hearing one of their own color . . . what else than mischief can be expected from the teaching of an ignorant enthusiast who knows nothing of God's word, and puts his own delusions in the place of divine truth? . . . and they say that whenever they come to hear me, it is from duty . . . because I am employed by their owners."

Wherever Baptists authorized Christian instruction, Methodists found 17
black leaders and black societies. "The society exerts its influence against 793
us which is remarkably strong," wrote the missionary at Pocotaligo in 797
1844. "This 'society' is altogether in the hands of the colored people who are actively engaged against us." Thus black leaders struggled to maintain their position among their people and continued preaching and practicing their own version of "Christianity." Methodists hoped the establishment of missions would fragment the influence of black teachers and thus foster the cause of "true" religion. A lengthy editorial was printed in the *Southern Christian Advocate* in 1846 where the author discussed the "deplorable exhibition of pseudo religion" among slaves of the large plantations in coastal South Carolina:

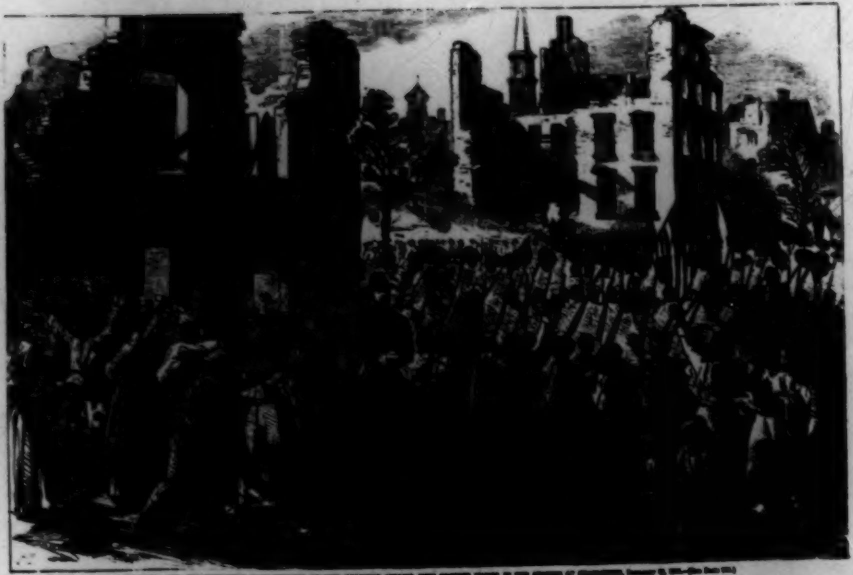
> The superstitious notions prevalent here and there, are probably the reflects of—more ancient superstitions, handed down by tradition and propagated by so called *leaders*, who prior to the preaching of the gospel by . . . the missionaries . . . wielded a fearful amount of spiritual influence among their followers, and the negro communities of the plantations generally. And it is what with remarkable tenacity these superstitious actions still maintain their hold in spite of a better teaching. Instead of giving up their visionary religiónism, embracing the simple truth . . . our missionaries find them endeavoring to incorporate their

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

tional structure. Baptists on the other hand had separate congregations, loosely bound together. Baptists sanctioned black associations that were relatively independent of the church and largely dominated by the slaves themselves. In some cases Baptists even provided Gullahs with a place to hold society and "prays" meetings among themselves, however humble such places were. Moreover, Baptist planters authorized religious leaders from the quarters with whom the Gullahs readily identified. Not surprisingly then, to the extent that Gullahs adopted Christianity, they considered themselves Baptists. The Baptist faith became the Gullahs' own personal religion, one they molded and fashioned away the watchful, critical eyes of the forces of spiritual "superiority" and physical exploitation. 17 567 797 (795)

Why did the Baptist slaveholders permit this flexibility and modicum of freedom to their slaves? The answer probably lies with the slaveholders' capacity for self-deception and belief in the power of their ability to dominate (for which as a class they are well known). Thus they were confident that black leaders' presentation of Christianity would not jeopardize plantation interests. In keeping with the merging Southern religious vogue of the time, slaveholders ultimately believed in the soothing effects of Christianity on a slave population's mentality. Furthermore, a limited degree of personal commitment had an effect on some slaveholders' attitude toward Christian instruction. For if "duty" and Christian instruction harmonized in bringing more order and discipline to the plantation, clearly nothing was at risk. The primary reason for Baptist involvement with Christian instruction was its potential for perpetuating power and cultural ascendancy over the slaves, to maintain the "Southern way of life" for the dominant class. The Gullahs, however, perceived the situation differently. 175 567 797

6



The Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Colored Regiment. Harper's Weekly.

[p. 255]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

701
175

793 him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's
free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered
his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise
House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions
throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demonstrates
793 that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion
539 as a special gift with a unique essence:

> 771 God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

771 The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy
in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances
was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith
was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality
is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in
heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that
emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing
the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African
heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a
collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued
[177] religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking
of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain
[797] features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their
common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable
or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

● 175 Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Christianity.
797 And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial,
their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, reinforcing
[177] older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism
was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right
[178] up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the
Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They
shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

doctrine. When given the opportunity, they fashioned their own reli- 175 •
gion. For instance, slaves in the wealthy coastal parish on the Waccamaw 797
peninsula had the atypical experience of receiving, from about 1835 to
1861, very concerted Christian instruction. The rector of All Saints 175
Episcopal Church at Waccamaw was Alexander Glennie of England, who,
with several assistants, spent thirty-three years preaching and teaching 567
bondspeople on numerous plantations. Glennie's parish and church were 797
showplaces of the Carolina Coast whenever planters and Southern clergymen wanted to demonstrate how fully they were meeting the spiritual needs of their "people." Glennie himself published a popular book of sermons designed especially for slaves. Hundreds of Gullahs were communicants at All Saints, and "thousands of colored children recited the catechism, intelligently." Observers were impressed with Glennie's effectiveness:

> He has been with them so long and is such an amiable kind man that the negroes love him very much and his example has as much influence over them as his preaching. We all went to the negro church one P.M. . . . the congregation responsed and sang the Te Deum with Mr. G. . . . . When he preached he would go on a while, then stop and ask them questions about what he had gone over and they answered very well.

Yet after the Civil War, returning residents witnessed what they termed 182
"religious deterioration" among the former slaves: 771

> Chapels were taken over by the negroes and soon resounded with barbaric shouting, the accompaniment of the debased Christianity of the emancipated slave. . . . 178
> They have forsaken the way which they had learned, and taken to themselves teachers of their own color. Fanaticism and extravagance rule in their assemblies. . . . There are indications of a return to African barbarism.[3]

During the Yankee occupation, representatives of the American Mis- 175
sionary Association noted that Gullahs were a "religious people," easily 771
inspired to sing and pray profusely. Jesus was "a common theme in their
conversation." But observers also noted that Gullahs knew little of "prac- 797
tical religion." Northern teachers commented on how quickly Gullah children memorized their school lessons. Yet the children's knowledge of religion was strangely confused with the current events in which they were caught up. One teacher, after "plainly" explaining to a Sunday School class of large boys the origin of the Ten Commandments and

•175 771 797 how they were given to Moses, then asked the children who wrote the Ten Commandments. She received such answers as "Uncle Sam," "General Saxby" (referring to General Rufus Saxton, Commander of the Department of the South), and "Columbus." On another occasion, a group of students were quizzed by officers in General Sherman's army. The question "Children, who is Jesus Christ?" was at first received with "paralyzed silence." Finally, a small boy loudly ventured, "General Saxby sar." An older boy responsed by giving his classmate "a vigorous thrust in the back" and proclaiming, 'Not so, boy! Him's Massa Linkum."'[3] So much for the effectiveness of Methodist catechism and Baptist Sunday School.

Yet the children were heard singing of Jesus constantly. Even at school children consistently sang such "spirituals" as the following: [533] [539]

Patrol around me. Tank God he no ketch me
O Lord, yes my Lord

....

In de mornin' when I rise,
Tell my Jesus Huddy oh, . . .

....

I would not let you go, my Lord,
I would not let you go,

....

I can't stay behin' my Lord,
I can't stay behin'[4]

175 771 779 795 Even adult knowledge of Christianity was severly limited despite their attraction to "things of the spirit." One example was their attitude toward Christmas. Although the Gullahs revered Jesus, few understood the significance of Christmas, the day of Christ's birth. Still it was a joyous season, viewed in slavery primarily as a rare occasion, when fresh meat was allocated, labor ceased for two or three days, and possibly a new suit of clothing was received. Mary Ames taught among the Gullahs on Edisto and Wadmalaw Islands where Methodism was reportedly particularly effective. Yet Ames expressed surprise that the people knew so little of the life of Christ, "not knowing even of his birth." But, she related, "they are all familiar with his sayings." Elizabeth Botume, a Hilton Head teacher, remembered one jubilant Christmastime among the Sea Island "Contrabands," when she was asked to preach:

> I replied that there was but one sermon fitting for the occasion, and I read the whole of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, first explaining to them the meaning of

> the evergreens, typical of Christ's life and teachings. They gave breathless atten- 175
> tion to all this, ejaculating from time to time, "My Lord! is dat so?" 771
> I know now they understood very little of all I said, but no speaker ever had
> more interested and attentive listeners. When I sat down, one of the leaders 779
> chanted rather than spoke a touching prayer, in which he styled me his "dear 795
> imperial preacher."
>
> Then the white friends sang,—"Joy to the world, the Lord has come."
>
> By this time the entire audience was aroused and ready to pray and sing all night. In each prayer the speaker tried to introduce, in his uncouth phraseology, some of the passages of Scripture he had heard read.[5]

Though lacking a basic background regarding the teachings and historical importance of Christ, Gullahs strongly identified with his suffering, crucifixtion, and resurrection. This, to them, was Christianity, and since they felt their earthly lives so closely paralleled that of Jesus, becoming "Christians" was for Gullahs somewhat of an apocalyptic fulfillment. In fact, much of the essence of their understanding of Protestant religion centered around Jesus and His followers. Other writers have suggested that African-American slaves saw themselves primarily in the same light as the Children of Israel. This association certainly inspired some of the Charleston rebels in 1822, as already discussed. Also, the commander of Gullah troops, Thomas Higginson, stated that the men's memories were a "vast, bewildered chaos of Jewish history and biography," and that most great events from the past, up to "the American Revolution, they instinctively attributed to Moses." How the experience of the Jews aroused the Gullahs was witnessed by a Civil War missionary:

> Last week I read to the *church full* the account of the escape of the Children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. I was amazed at the impression it seemed to make. The remarks the old men made were graphic and eloquent. It made them recount with praise to God their escape. The little church seemed like dreamland to me almost when they got stirred to talk.[6]

Yet most Gullahs conceptualization of Christianity centered on the 175
experiences of Jesus rather than the Jews, as is evident in their songs, 771
prayers, and conversations. The militant nationalism so strongly associ- 779
ated with the Jewish struggle was a prominent ideology of Christian-oriented slaves during the Vesey Conspiracy but was not a major orientation in Gullah religion. Instead, as far as Christianity was concerned, Gullahs relied on a conviction that a moral wrong had been committed

175 against them, as against Christ, and the transgression would ultimately
771 be rectified. Not that they refused to struggle against bondage, but rather
779 the Gullahs actively expressed their resistance and opposition through cultural tenacity, collective strength, a deep identification with Christ, and a conviction that with Him they had a covenant of freedom.

In any case, Christianity largely contributed to helping Gullahs consciously find a reason for being, and much of what they embraced in that religion conformed to this purpose. Thus, while it was difficult for them to grasp the concept behind the Ten Commandments, the story of the Jews being led out of Egypt could be easily internalized. More significantly, although intellectual perceptions of Jesus Christ caused some problems, and Gullahs did not totally comprehended the words of the Sermon on the Mount, nevertheless they saw their wordly existence as closely harmonizing with that of Christ's. They, as a people, were very much within the philosophical drift of the Sermon.

The Gullahs earnestness and simplicity in matters of religion left little room for doctrinal trappings that made Protestantism a religion fashioned to suit the needs of various social groups within Anglo-European society. From the teachings of Methodists and Baptists, Gullahs critically extracted that which gave meaning to their life-struggle, often devising novel interpretations of Christianity. The example of Christ provided uniqueness to their oppression since he too was a great sufferer. The comparison encouraged them to persevere because he was also the embodiment of a life-giving symbol. A ninety-two-year-old former slave
175 recounted the experience of her mother, who along with her five children
771 was sold away from their plantation. The mother was in a very dis-
787 traught state when a man, "white and shining" appeared with whom she had the following dialogue:

567

> "Sarah, Sarah, Sarah!"
>
> "Yes Sir."
>
> "What is you fretin' bout so?"
>
> "Sir, I'm a stranger here, parted from my husband, with five little children and not a morsel of bread."
>
> "You say you're parted from your husband? You're not parted from your husband. You're jest over a little slash of water. Suppose you had to undergo what I had to. I was nailed to the Cross of Mount Calvary. And I am here today. Who do you put your trust in?"[7]

175 The observations of black Northern teacher Charlotte Forten provide
771 a further example. Forten was a frequent visitor at the Praise House and

779
796

witnessed the Gullahs' spiritual enthusiasm at these meetings. She no- 175
ticed an old blind man, Maurice, who led the singing with a remarkable 771
voice, and sang with special forcefulness the favorite "New Jerusalem." 779
According to Forten, his voice rang out "a glad, triumphal sound," but 796
Maurice's story was a tragic one:

> His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and ebber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction."[8]

Undoubtedly the pathos was eased somewhat by the Gullahs' ratio 175
nalization that no matter how painful life was, someone had endured 771
more than they, by their belief in the efficacy of salvation, and their 779
expectation of immortality. Also, a great source of sustenance and faith
in themselves derived from the Gullahs' presumption that they, like Christ,
were historically guiltless. Gullahs reportedly possessed a "piety" of the
heart. And they displayed an intuitive knowledge of the moral teachings
of Christianity based upon practical experience, the socioreligious influ-
ence of African religion, and their own sense of collective survival.

Northern missionaries and teachers were impressed with how much 175
Gullah religious expressions "sparkle with rich genius." Their belief in 771
the noble nature of their circumstances helped to inspire creative incli-
nations. Gullahs called themselves a "peculiar people," and the words of
an old Baptist deacon, recorded by Laura Towne, poignantly illustrate
their communal spirituality. After planters deserted the Islands, Gullahs 175
were compelled by Yankees to continue working in the cotton fields, 771
often for little or nothing. Bondspeople wanted to cultivate provisions
for their families, and just as the Gullahs were beginning to trust some 177
white Northerners, another calamity befell them. In May 1862, Gullah [701]
men were, at bayonet point, conscripted into the Union Army by Gen-
eral David Hunter. The Gullahs feared the worse, that as their masters
had warned, they were being sent to Cuba. All gathered together before
the men were herded off. Fathers took children in their arms. Women
gave way to expressions of grief that touched the hearts of the strongest
observers of the scene. According to Towne, this was an exceedingly
low point for the Gullahs, who had already withstood so much:

> We, anxious and depressed, talked in low tones over this extra ordinary proceeding. . . . That evening we ladies went to the praise house and heard good, old Marcus exhort, Dagus pray and all sing. Marcus said he had often told all the

175 brethren they must be just like birds when the gunner is about, expecting a crack
177 every minute. "Dey ain't neber know what gwine to befal dey, pore black folks
must wait and hab faith, . . . Massa laff one day. Ask me if I tink Christ want
771 black nigger in heben. One ting I sure. We'uns gwine to be where de crucify
Lord am. And if dat place be Hell, He gwine make it heben for we."[9]

175 Gullah religion was not quiescent, nor an enslavement of the mind,
despite the "Christian" and long-suffering attitude seemingly responsible
771 for their sensitiveness and lofty, visionary approach toward oppression.
Many observers were appalled at what they interpreted as resignation among Sea Island African-Americans. Arthur Sumner wrote from St. Helena Island in 1863, "I am astonished that they should be fit to live after such generations of mere animal life. A higher race would have lost all moral sense." Even one of the Gullahs' staunchest advocates, Elizabeth Botume, believed that "the patience of the freedpeople in sickness was so general and remarkable, it seemed like apathy." If what Botume observed was only resignation, it probably was a function of Gullah affiliation with Christianity. Yet their coping capacity was also possible because of the sense of protection that spiritual association offered, with religious and community membership forging ties that strengthened the Gullahs' resolve. Thomas Wentworth Higginson was surprised to find Gullahs so little demoralized and he accurately attributed this to religion:

> I learned to think that we abolitionists had underrated the suffering produced by slavery among the negroes, but had overrated the demoralization. Or rather, we did not know how the religious temperament of the negroes had checked the demoralization. Yet . . . it must be admitted that this temperament, born of sorrow and oppression, is far more marked in the slave than in the native African.[10]

771 Higginson perceptively realized the lack of "demoralization" wrought
by slavery. But the personality and "religious temperament" of Gullahs owed much to a non-Christian tradition, and was not "born of sorrow and oppression" or as foreign to the "native African" as Higginson imagined. As previously suggested, African religion and philosophy emphasized the celebration and affirmation of human life, and within this scheme, while God was the apex of the theory of being, humankind was the center, or pivotal point, of earthly existence. Gullahs were very much a part of this world view. Even though on the conscious level the pillar of their faith rested on their association with Christ, this may have primarily provided Old World ideology with an organized, plausible New

771 World perception. Anthropologist Paul Radin has written that the Christian God provided African-American slaves with a "fixed point," and that they converted God to themselves.[11] Of the Gullahs at least it might also be more aptly stated that they converted Christianity to their African world view. Gullahs used religion as a justification to combat objective forces, to collectively perpetuate a rich sublimity in cultural form, and as a spiritually liberating ideology. It was not so much that Christianity instilled a sense of resignation because of belief in future rewards, though admittedly for some this was a determining factor, but that an African philosophical tradition was asserted in the slave quarters.[12]

567 For slaves, acceptance of Christianity did not imply negation of earthly
771 life. The supreme example of this was their desire for liberty. Freedom
was a continuous topic of conversation among them. Robert Smalls, who
175 grew up in antebellum Beaufort, remembered that as a boy he first heard
of Frederick Douglass in the slave quarters of one of his owner's Ladies Island plantations. Three people in the slave quarters could read and every scrap of printed matter was given to them to translate. One of the literates, a recent arrival from Charleston, secured a copy of one of Douglass's speeches and read it to the slaves. Between the three literate field hands, the bondspeople of the McKee plantations kept abreast of the "politicking" over slavery. An old slave woman of Edisto Island told Northerner Mary Ames, "I heard for a long time of war and the coming of the Yankees, and I spects my bones be white before I see that time,
[212] but I did live to see them, bress de Lord." On one of the St. Helena
Island plantations, a black carpenter held a secret night school for the men during bondage.[13] Thus did the Gullahs attempt to apprise themselves of events affecting their future.

175 The most obvious testament of the Gullahs' will to freedom is their
701 participation in the Civil War, once it became a liberation struuggle. In
177 May 1862, when General Hunter drafted the men without authorization,
there was no desire to fight. The Gullah men, having "smelt a very large rat," took to the woods to "split rails,"but were soon rounded up. They were taken to Hilton Head, drilled, kept until after the harvest, placing an extreme hardship on their families, then discharged without pay or freedom. Thus, in the fall of 1862, when the authorized draft was called, with the provision for emancipation, many hesitated. The memories of the previous impressment were still fresh, and "weakened their confidence" in "promises for the future." Enlistments were slow at first. But

•175 177 701 the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]

Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the botton of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

17 701 In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory, mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

merged under slavery and created one people with common interests, 175•
ambitions, beliefs, and sense of oppression. 533

The Gullahs' Marseillaise was the exhilarating spiritual "New Jerusa- (186)
lem": [539)

De Talles' tree in Paradise
De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
an' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my new Jerusalem!

Blow Gabriel! Trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!

Paul and Silas jail-bound
Sing God's praise both night and day,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem![21]

This favorite "shout" song of the Gullahs was triumphant rather than tragic. Thus it was not one of those to be sung with a "heavy heart" or a "troubled speerit." "New Jerusalem" was an uplifting, infectious tune. Its symbolic range could harmonize with a number of situations, circumstances, and experiences. When freedman Maurice, who had been blinded by his master in a fit of rage, sang "New Jerusalem" at the Praise House, his mind turned toward heaven and the prospect of gaining his sight in
a future world. But when the freedpeople sang "New Jerusalem" at the 175
Emancipation Jubilee on New Year's Day in 1866, it was their earthly 527
future and enthusiasm for their long-awaited freedom that filled their
thoughts and expectations. The tree of life was the tree of liberty, as 533
paradise was a land free of bondage. The meaning behind this spiritual was not lost on Northern teacher Elizabeth Botume:

> The streets of the city were filled with happy freed people. According to their spiritual, they had "fought for liberty," and this was their "New Jerusalem,"of which they so often sang. Even the poorest, and those most scantily clothed, looked as if they already "walked that golden street," and felt "that starry crown" upon their uncovered heads. It was indeed a day of great rejoicing, and one long to be remembered. These people were living their "New Jerusalem."[22]

Spirituals sung during the Civil War attest to Gullah creativity and fur- 175
ther demonstrate that the desire for freedom was as strong a motivation 533
as relgious piety. Songs such as the following grew out of the war years: 539

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175
533
539

We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
We'll soon be free,
When de Lord will call us home.

My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
My brudder, how long,
'Fore we done suffrin' here?

It won't be long (thrice)
'Fore de Lord will call us home.[23]

[567] Slaves in Georgetown were jailed at the outbreak of the war for singing this spiritual. As a little drummer boy explained to Higginson, "Dey tink *de Lord* mean for say de Yankees." Higginson doubted that the slaves made the same association of which their masters thought them capable. Once again he reveals his nineteenth-century "romantic racialism." But no one could mistake the plaintive meaning in the following song, first heard at Hilton Head Island and said to have been a song "to which the Rebellion had actually given rise":

No more peck o' corn for me,
No more, no more,
No more peck o' corn for me,
Many tousand go.

No more driver's lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more pint o' salt for me,
No more, etc.

No more hundred lash for me,
No more, etc.

No more mistress' call for me,

. . . .

Many tousand go.[24]

181
771
567
Thus, while God, personified as Jesus, offered Gullahs an explanation for life and provided a model of virtue, as did their African God, this was not an abjuration of human existence. Their religion contained a

alism. Consequently, religion cannot be viewed only or primarily as a 181
source of visionary, spiritual fulfillment. Nor can religion be mainly viewed 567
as manipulative. For Gullahs it offered a politic for collective consciousness and group conformity within an African-Christian synthesis. [771]

Freedom was not attained as the 1822 conspirators had invisioned. 175
When freedom came, years later, a New rather than Old Testament
ideology partly gave meaning and fruition to that liberty. As Leon Lit- 181
wack points out, few triumphs in the spirit of freedom could equal the [346]
day in 1865 when in Charleston, a cornerstone was laid for a new African Methodist Church. It was over forty years after the old wooden structure in Hampstead had been destroyed. The new church was to be built by black hands. The architect was Robert Vesey, son of Denmark.[28] In 1822 freedom under the banner of "A Chosen People" eluded black South Carolinians through no fault of those who made the supreme sacrifice. Yet who could fault the Gullahs and perhaps other African-Americans in 1865, as they regarded themselves if not as a chosen people, at least as the "chosen generation" of a "peculiar people?"

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

CHAPTER 9

Folk Religion in the Slave Quarters

•175

> All was silent on the plantation. The sun had gone down and the chill December wind which blew crisply from the tide-river had driven the people into the cabins. Here and there all over the plantation, like the throbbing stars which night had called to light her world, the red glow of the fireplaces flashed out into the darkness through the open doorways, as if to mark the heart of a home. Suddenly a sharp persistent jingle broke the silence. It was the Praise House bell calling the people of the plantation together for their evening "Praise". . . .*

575
771

> The secret societies are an embodiment of . . . supernatural power. Collectively, they provide an institutional structure which bears . . . similarities to the medieval church in Europe. . . . They lay down various rules of conduct, prescribe certain forms of behavior and are the sole agency capable of remitting certain sins.**

175
567

On the Sea Islands, one rarely saw a plantation home that did justice to the name "big house," since most planters maintained their more elegant residences elsewhere. But there was always a large, airy "main house," sometimes inhabited by the planter and his family during the spring and cold season. The main house was situated about half a mile from the overseer's abode. Not too far away from the overseer's residence were [361] the yards and outbuildings, followed by the slave quarters. Gullahs called their quarters "the street," and it was described as "a real street in the

---

(113)

*"The Long Look," n.d., misc. corr., Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC.

**Kenneth Little, "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization" American Anthropologist 51 (1949): 199.

middle of a sandy cotton field, with cabins on each side in a row." The first building on the street was the Praise House, a paintless, cheerless-appearing building of boards that "looked as if a heavy gale might lay it low." Some antebellum Praise Houses were equipped with a bell (not to be confused with the driver's horn). Several nights during the week, as well as on Sundays, its welcoming, soothing sound brought the people on "the street" together for assembly. The following description, although a post-Civil War one, could easily fit the antebellum scene:

175
567
361
[346]
[202)

> . . . soon dark figures moved along those countless little footpaths that intersect the plantation in all directions.
>
> The Praise House filled slowly. It was a small one-roomed cabin that looked weirdly alive as you approached it through the darkness. The numerous cracks in roof and walls gave the outlines of the building sketched in streaks of light against the background of the night.
>
> The room was filled with rough backless benches, and at one end was a little table for the leader. Behind this stood a long bench where several men, officers of the Praise House sat facing the people in motionless silence with half-closed eyes and bowed heads.[1]

175
794
346

Most planters erected these meetinghouses after 1840 to afford the slaves a place for worship and to deprive the inhabitants of various plantations of an opportunity to mingle. Yet the Praise House also offered Gullahs a means to free expression. It was not only a place for religious gathering and spiritual solace but was essential to their community structure. At the Praise House, among fellow slaves, Gullahs publicly professed what they considered a satisfactory spiritual experience, as it was necessary to obtain approval from the Praise House congregation before petitioning the master and the Baptist church for membership. If the religious experience was not inspiring enough, or if the elders and the membership doubted the candidate's sincerity, the individual was not recommended for baptism.[2]

175
794
346
567
368
[795]

In addition to being a means of bringing conformity and spiritual harmony to the slave quarters, the Praise House was very much like a town hall where members of the plantation gathered, using prayer, song, and exhortation to comfort each other. J. Miller McKim, a Northern observer very much interested in Gullah music, wrote in 1862:

175
567
368
[533)

> I asked one of these blacks . . . (Prince Rivers, Sergeant, 1st Reg. S.C.V.)—where they got these songs. "Dey make 'em, sah." "How do they make them?" After a pause, evidently casting about for an explanation, he said: "I'll tell you,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 it's dis way. My master call me up, and order me a short peck of corn and a
567 hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de
368 praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it."[3]

The slaves' loyalty was to the Praise House rather than to the Baptist
[533 church few of them ever attended. Even during Northern occupation
[795 and after the Civil War, Gullahs continued to gather at the Praise House
whenever trouble befell their community. Despite the fact that white
Baptist churches were almost completely under black control during the
war (in terms of both structure and organization), the source of power
on the plantations was still the Praise House. And after the war, Gullahs
continued to see it as the center of group life and to conduct themselves
according to Praise House customs and regulations.[4]

175 Since the Praise House congregation consisted of families who knew,
through daily contact, the personal life of a candidate, it was possible to
567 scrutinize behavior and to ostracize an individual, not so much on purely
794 religious grounds as for breaches of trust within the quarters. Elders and
members exerted great disciplinary power over plantation hands, having
the right to "turn dem outen de Pray's House if dey ain't fur walk right."
Hence, while the Gullahs probably attached little significance to church
disciplinary measures instituted by the master, but which they, as Praise
House members, were forced to implement, a crime against one of their
own was a different matter. Long after slavery, the Praise House contin-
ued effectively to hold its members responsible for good behavior, and
[674 the influence of these small units of the church has long been credited
for the fact that crimes were rarely committed among Gullahs. In the
794 1920s the Beaufort sheriff stated that the Praise Houses kept Gullahs
law-abiding even as freedpeople, "because the Negro fears the Lord more
621 than he fears the law." Yet it was not "fear" so much as a desire for
harmony and a sense of love and respect for each other that allowed
Gullahs to maintain integrity in the community. The significance of Praise
[626 House loyalty and community membership as a social regulating force
has been observed by researchers as late as the 1970s.[5] Existence of these
[368 plantation meetinghouses conformed to the desires of slaveholders, but
they also served to strengthen bonds of kinship and a sense of common-
wealth among the Gullahs.

805 Gullahs often expressed time in terms of before or after they "had
sense." The concept puzzled Northern teachers who worked among them
794 during the Civil War. "Catching sense," as the Gullahs called it, a term
175 still used today on some Sea Islands, refers to the time when a person
567

completes the process of joining the Church and Praise House. According 794
to Patricia Guthrie who did field work in the Sea Islands, "entrance 175 •
into the religious and the politico-jural domains parallels the time when 567
plantation membership becomes fully realized," or when a person "catches (805)
sense." Joining the Praise House formally expressed this initiation into
the plantation domain. An individual was no longer merely a member of
a household but a citizen of the plantation community, and a member of
the Church. Thus personhood was attained through "catching sense."
All members had to answer to the religious court system when discord (795)
arose. The Praise House law was considered the "just law," and when (692)
disputes arose, settlement was reached in the religious court. Praise House
membership demanded that all grievances go before this "Committee."
The "unjust law" was essentially white law.[6] This raises questions about
how plantation membership functioned before widespread Christian
teaching by whites, and before freedom. The benne seed ritual indicates
that before Methodist missionaries came, plantation depredations against
the master did not warrant censure in the slave quarters. It is doubtful (797)
that this changed even after slaves "accepted" white Christianity. Internal
association among any group is more significant than outside forces,
especially if the outside element is an oppressive one. Also, community
leaders did not go about seeking wrongdoers. Instead, cases were reported
by other church members or by individuals involved in the grievance.
Obviously a case brought to the leader's attention by the planter
had to be acted upon. But the Gullahs did not view plantation "discipline"
from the master's perspective, or as "just law."

The religious court heard both sides of a dispute and encouraged the 175
parties to reach an agreement without input from the Praise House leader 795
or other church members. Usually cases were settled at the first level. If 692
not, the case went to the leader and then to the membership. The religious 567
court system was respected and taken seriously. The small amount
of crimes after slavery indicate that few Gullahs came before it and few
wanted to be censored for misconduct. The ultimate aim of the religious
court was to maintain "peace and harmony" in the community. The
Gullahs believed this was best accomplished by settling disputes within
the group. There was strong disapproval of anyone who went to the
master or, after slavery, to the secular authorities. Such a person did not
want a settlement, but to merely create more trouble for the group.[7]

The same attachment to religion and community membership that existed 175
among West Africans was observed among the Gullahs. At the 795
794

175 time of the Civil War, over half of the adult population of the Sea Islands 795 were church members. Many others were baptized during the Northern occupation, some stating that "they had desired for years to join the 794 church, but could not get leave from their masters." Francis Kemble noted that on the Butler estate on St. Simon's Island, slaves were forbidden to go to church and ministers were not allowed on the plantation. Yet some slaves were willing to endure corporal punishment and were baptized without approval. An American Missionary Association minister observed in 1863 that "the colored people think a good deal of belonging somewhere. This is alright but I fear many of them have been taught to think that joining church was the principal thing." Arthur 829 Sumner recorded an incident that gives insight into the Gullahs propensity to equate communal and secular concerns. The following conversation occurred between Sumner and his housekeeper Patience:

> "How many children you got, Misser Sumner," said she.
>
> "Not one, thank the Lord."
>
> "No Chillun?"
>
> "I'm not married."
>
> In sheer amazement she sat down and stared at me as little boys do at the museum.
>
> "Oh, you'r joking."
>
> "Fact."
>
> Then she rolled over, and laughed till she was sore.
>
> "Not married! Why," said she, "you look settled!"
>
> She went off, finally, muttering to herself. . . . The next morning she returned to the charge.
>
> "You a member sure."
>
> "Eh?"
>
> "A member, a church member."
>
> "Neither married nor a member," I replied with solemn voice. She almost dropped my breakfast. She has been trying I see, to comprehend this double phenomenon; but she makes bad work of it. Sometimes I find her looking at me with wonder and commiseration; and if I ask her what she is thinking about she avoids a direct answer.[8]

Sumner's was a kind of individualism which Patience apparently could not fully comprehend. No wife, no children, no membership meant 771 alienation—no place in the community. Gullah religion was not only a contract between God and the individual. It was a mutual agreement 829 among themselves which implied that they could not love God without loving each other. While their common oppression bound them together in one sense, the Gullahs' decision to see themselves as contracting with

each other to live as "one body" also allowed them to operate collectively 771
and ward off the demoralizing effects of exploitation. A central element 826
in their religious attitude was a sense of individual honor. Love for their [577)
fellows, and a respectful disposition would find favor with God. This 771
orientation was often expressed in terms of "manners." "A Christian is 576
mannerable," the Gullahs were fond of saying. One Gullah soldier, in
his supplications to heaven, implored, "Let me lib so dat when I die I
shall *hab* manners." Northern teacher Harriet Ware described an old Gullah [567]
woman, Widow Bedotte, who had been driven insane by watching her [175)
master whip her daughter to death; "very sad it is to hear her talk,"
wrote Ware. Yet, although Widow Bedotte's epithets against her master [794)
and the rebels were voluble and denunciatory, "she prides herself upon
her good manners, which she says she gets because she belongs to the
church, which every now and then she joins again." Charlotte Forten 576
observed the Gullahs' attitude toward each other:

> These people are exceedingly polite in their manner towards each other, each new arrival bowing, scraping his feet and shaking hands with the others, while there are constant greetings such as, "Huddy? How's yer lady?" ("howd' ye do? How's your wife?") The hand-shaking is performed with the greatest possible solemnity. There is never the faintest shadow of a smile on anybody's face during this performance. The children, too are taught to be very polite to their elders, and it is the rarest thing to hear a disrespectful word from a child to his parent, or to any grown person. They have really what the New-Englanders call "beautiful manners."[9]

Despite enslavement and poverty, the Gullahs maintained a generous 621
attitude, never allowing one of their number to go without food or shel- 592
ter. Kinship was important, but the Gullah concept of a household did 175
not necessarily mean filial attachment, but all those living within a family and community structure, with the rights, duties, and privileges therein.
While there were many children without parents because of the ravages [736)
of bondage, reportedly there were no orphans on the Sea Islands. Gul-
lahs were also fond of bestowing presents upon their Northern benefac- 431
tors, or anyone whom they considered a friend. Gifts of sweet potatoes, 175
peanuts, and eggs which had a special spiritual significance and were rather expensive, were often offered to visitors. "They feel hurt if their presents are refused," wrote Laura Towne. "Old Susannah often sends to table, fish and other extras. They don't want pay. No indeed."[10]

While the Christian example contributed to inspiring a kindred spirit, 000
the Gullah's sense of charity also had another source. African peoples

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

000 have a tradition of politeness. Among the Limba of Sierra Leone for example, "shame" (Kulaku) and "honor" (yiki) are spoken of often. According respect to leaders, strangers, one's wife, and her relatives, is of great importance. Fear of shame is a very real sanction in everyday life. Rudeness or abusive behavior also brings shame, which only an apology can erase. Ceremonious welcomings involving hand shaking are greatly stressed among Africans. Thanks, greetings, and farewells are often reinforced by a gift, approved of as much for its token value of "giving the words weight," as for its economic worth. A gift of a fowl, eggs, or rice is commonly offered when guests arrive. A physician assigned to the colony of Sierra Leone in the late eighteenth century, wrote that the people possessed a "great share of pride, and are easily affected by an insult." They could not even bear a harsh expression, or raised voice without distaste. One of the severest insults toward an African was to "speak disrespectfully of his mother," which the Africans called "cursing her." More recently, a researcher in the Kongo was told that there were two things he should know right away about BaKongo peoples. "The first is that we all came from Mbaza Kongo. The second is the importance of good manners."[11]

● 175 567 682 Aside from a spirit of cooperation, Gullahs used their religion to foster a sense of justice. Undoubtedly, since they were exploited so unjustly on all quarters, it was important that among each other fairness predominate. The power of the community and the extent to which slaves could pursue their indignation against erring members was not always peaceful, and could reach extreme proportions. Jenkins Mikell's recollection of a grisly event on Edisto Island represents a case in point. Crimes within the slave quarters were infrequent, but they did occur:

> Early one morning, we were awakened by the repressed excitement we felt around the dwelling. We soon found that all the people on the home place were in a terribly wrought up state and waiting for the Master to appear. A murder had been committed among them. A man had killed his wife in anger. The poor woman had been found dead hanging by her neck to the rafter of the cabin, and the guilty husband had run away and left her there. He was caught during the day . . . he was tried and convicted and remanded to the scene of his crime for execution. . . . On the day of his execution very little work was done in the community by the negroes. All attended the tragic scene. His coffin was made on the plantation and placed in a wagon. The doomed man, tied, seated upon this coffin rode six miles to the place of execution, and by his side seated on the same gruesome seat was his companion in guilt—a woman. She was made to witness at close quarters his dreadful end. She returned to the place of burial,

on the plantation, seated on the box containing his dead body, and as the body 175
was lowered into the grave, she was seized by a frenzied mob, forced into the 567
open pit and every effort was made to bury her alive. These efforts nearly succeeded. 682
But wiser counsels prevailed and she was at last released.[12]

In this situation moral judgment within the slave community was not [771]
in keeping with the Christian doctrine of forgiveness that usually characterized
the Gullahs' disposition. Instead, it indicates how African influences
continued. Apparently, Gullahs believed that some violations
should not be summarily dismissed or forgiven. Among the Windward 000
Coast peoples, no concept of sin seems to have been present. Yet among
some, the Mende for example, there was a sense of guilt in two areas of
government—breaches in communal laws and regulations, and violation
of the rights of those unable to help themselves. The BaKongo considered
sin to be a wrong against society, not God, and thus should be
punished by society. The above Gullah crime could be viewed as betrayal 175
of communal trust, an individual violation, and as an immoral act 682
against the people as a whole. Such violations called for punishment, not 679
only for the offender, but for those closely related to the act.[13] Such
irrevocable behavior among the bondspeople could possibly undermine
their collective strength and organization, and no doubt Gullahs felt that
depravity should be rooted out in a drastic manner as a warning to others
who might be driven to commit such violence. Yet the fact that the [771]
example was an atypical incident demonstrates that adoption of a common
socioreligious connection among Gullahs had more of a restraining
effect on deviant social behavior than threat of violent retaliation.

In the Gullah slave community the most important people were religious 17
leaders, comprising two groups. One consisted of black elders, and 773
the others were spiritual parents, or the black elders' "help." Black elders 774
were chosen by whites, often by Baptist planters. These black leaders,
referred to as "deacons" or "watchmen" were responsible for "watchcare" 567
of members of the plantation societies. They were the experienced church members in the quarters, having some knowledge of Christianity and probably taking their religion more literally and seriously than their fellow bondspeople. Black elders maintained relatively close contact with the Baptist churches during the last thirty years of bondage, and were exemplary people, managing to walk a thin line between securing the trust and confidence of both masters and slaves.[14] Undoubtedly, to the slaveholders black elders embodied those features of Christianity which,

175 standingly."[19] It was an impractical expectation, and few of the slaves
795 attempted to provide the missionaries with an "adequate" explanation of
797 religion. Yet true to their adaptive genius, Gullahs embraced the term
567 and devised a unique interpretation of "seeking Jesus" that had little to do with the Methodists' idea, but which the Baptists accepted as proof of "Christian" conversion. A critical and frustrated Methodist missionary
175 provided the *Southern Christian Advocate* with a revealing illustration of
787 the slaves' method of determining religious conversion and their "seekin'"
567 process:

> When one of these people becomes serious, or "begins to pray" as he would say,—and this is seldom the result of preaching, but most commonly a "warning in a dream,"—it is customary for him to select, by the direction of "the spirit" of course, with some church member of influence, as his spiritual guide. Females are often chosen. Soon after the "vision" in which his teacher is pointed out, he makes known to him his revelation and puts himself under his instruction. These are of a two-fold nature, answering to the two-fold character of the teacher. He is now a prophet to teach him how to conduct himself, and particularly how to pray. He is also "an interpreter of visions" to whom the seeker relates all his "*travel.*" This word *travel* . . . is one of the most significant in their language, and comprehends all those exercises, spiritual, visionary and imaginative, which make up an "experience." . . . These travels may differ in some things; and in others they all agree. Each seeker meets with warnings—awful sights or sounds, and always has a vision of a white man who talks with him, warns him, and sometimes makes him carry a burden, and in the end leads him to the river. When the teacher is satisfied with the travel of the seeker, he pronounces "he git thru"; and he is ready for the church. This decision is never questioned by the neophyte. "I prayed under him," says the latter; "he is my spiritual father." Thus the case is settled. The man's religion is endorsed by an authoritative *imprimatur* and heaven is sure. Meanwhile perhaps there has been no solitary conviction of the true nature of sin, no genuine repentance to embitter sin to the soul, no distant apprehension of the sacrifices of the Savior and the merit of his death as the atonement for sin, and the great procuring cause of pardon: in a word, no distant element of Christian experience involved in the whole affair.[20]

The lengthy account failed to mention several other paramount aspects of the "seekin'" experience. First, the seeker was expected, as far as possible, to shun all "social or worldly pleasures." Second, the seeker was required to "go into de wilderness," where the "visions" usually appeared to the candidate and where the travel took place. Solitude and meditation were essential features of the seeking period. Approved and unapproved night vigils were common. Such places as the graveyard,

normally an absolute taboo for Gullahs (except for the occasion of buri- 175
als), cotton or corn fields, and the marshes were favorite praying grounds 787
for seekers. Gullahs believed that "Notin' won't hurt you while you bin 567
seekin'." Yet no matter where one prayed, "in de fields and pine woods," "in de bush," "out doors," or "under live oak," all was defined as "de wilderness." It was not generally possible for slaves to withdraw in the literal sense. Often as a gesture of going into the wilderness they would refrain from social interaction, sometimes not even speaking to family members or friends unless it was absolutely necessary, communicating only with their spiritual leader. It was a time of utter prostration for the seeker. Untidy and exceptionally ragged clothing was worn. Female seekers often covered themselves with ash. Seekers wore a "little white cloth or string," around their heads, "jus to mark deirself diffun'." This had to be worn, unwashed, for the duration of the seeking period. During Northern occupation, despairing teachers remarked that children were taken out of school when they became seekers, and since "de trabbel" usually lasted for months, sometimes the entire school was disrupted. From Hilton Head Island, Elizabeth Botume wrote:

> In the winter most of the children were "seeking and praying." The older people said, "They do hang their heads and pray"; and they were not allowed to do much of anything else for fear they would "be turned back.". . . .
>
> These religious revivals were a source of much disturbance in school routine. . . . We cannot call these "religious excitements"; the young seekers were in a stupid and lethargic condition. Some children were not allowed to come to school for fear they would be turned back.[21]

It was not only essential for seekers to relate a satisfactory emotional 175
experience, they also had to declare themselves free of malice toward 789
anyone and ready to abide by rules of the church via society control. 567
Hence the Praise House operated as the extending influence on behavior 795
in the slave quarters. While the seekers' dream experiences varied, they first had to be bad, fearful dreams, which the spiritual parent explained. As the seeker's "experience" neared an end, metamorphosis was indicated by, among other things, a profession of charity for others. This was always an important part of their spiritual affirmation:

> "You think you are converted?"
>
> "Yes, . . . I' so lovin! I loves ebery body—all de trees, an' de chicken, an' de peoples; I loves ebery ting an' ebery body. . . ."[22]

175 587 784 [775] More important than feelings of guilt and sinfulness, so fundamental to Christian conversion, was the seeker's desire to become a part of the community. The more intense the "trabbel" or "vision," the more dramatic the integration into society.

The mystical nature of the slaves' conversion experience involved a travel during which seekers often prayed and spoke to religious nature objects rather than to God.[23] As the Methodist informant noted, this was not linked to a Christian tradition. Literature on the previously discussed [171] secret cultural associations of the Windward Coast peoples is limited, since even today ethnic groups generally refuse to discuss them. Nevertheless, there is enough existing material on this tradition to suggest secret society link with Gullah concepts of conversion, personhood, and group membership as practiced within and reinforced by Christianity.

000 Initiation into the Poro and Sande contained two central components—contact with spirits and extended instruction, both aimed at socialization of the individual and preparation for an active communal role. Among the Kuranko, Mano, Limba, Mende, Temne, Gola, and other ethnic groups, withdrawal from organized society into the bush was clearly related to a type of release through transcendence, commonly expressed as a lonely, spiritual journey or travel on which the initiate becomes acquainted with death. The Poro and Sande were the universal male and female cultural societies of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and parts of Gambia. Boys and girls usually entered the bush school at puberty, but at separate periods and for different lengths of time. Sande initiates, like Gullah females, wore a white head tie, called "the white thing," and covered their faces with white clay while Gullah female seekers used ash. The *Mazowo* (high priestess) always wore white and was envisioned thusly by initiates. Withdrawal from village society was a ritualistic death. Initiates were taken into a sacred designated area of the bush by Poro-Sande priests and priestesses, called altar mothers and fathers. Here they symbolically took leave of earth and journeyed down into the spirit world, the world of the dead. Among some groups, the Mano, for example, these spirits were ancestors. For others, the Kuranko and Limba, they were spirits the initiates encountered, spirits who were nameless, capricious, quaishuman nature beings sometimes occupying streams, rivers, and mountains. In any case, contact with these spirits represented a form of demise and in their realm initiates dwelled during the entire period of segregation. The boys and girls conversed with the spirits and related these

code of the society could be imposed upon leaders by society members. 000
The zo were the principal characters in the society, and were charged with protecting the traditions and institutions of the group. The zo people had a "majestic status." They were respected by chiefs and elders, and "honored with intense devotion by the youth of the land." In personal characteristics a zo was "chivalrous, courteous, public spirited, law-abiding and fearless." The zo was also a teacher of "native lore, arts, and crafts." He or she had full knowledge of the history and traditions of the people. Above all, the zo were "authentic" judges of all matters pertaining to the people's welfare.[26]

As role models these African leaders correspond to some extent with 175 •
Gullah elders. But there is an even closer relation between zo and Gullah 171
spiritual parents to whom the slaves looked for guidance and who main- 562
tained such "absolute authority" over them. Laura Towne wrote: 792

> I went to-day to see Maum Katie, an old African woman who remembers 554
> worshipping her own gods in Africa but who has been nearly a century in this
> country. She is bright and talkative, a great "spiritual mother," a fortune teller, (791)
> or rather prophetess, and a woman of tremendous influence over her spiritual
> children.

Similarly, Harriet Ware was acquainted with "Old Peggy, the 'leader' 175
from Fripp Point." Ware was told that "Old Peggy and Binah" were the 562
two "whom all that came into the Church, had come through, and the 554
Church supports (takes care of) them." Thus the Methodist missionary 791
correctly assessed the role and power of women diviners in Gullah church 792
membership. A further example of female influence in the sacred-secular world of slaves is provided by Francis Kemble. An old woman on the Butler plantations named Sinda, reigned as a prophetess among the slaves for many years and acquired as ascendency over them. When she declared the world would soon end, "her assertion took such possession of the people on the estate that they refused to work, and the rice and cotton fields were threatened with an indefinite fallow in consequence of this strike on the part of the cultivators." The overseer, realizing the impossibility of attempting force, waited until the appointed day arrived. Sinda' prediction proved false and no emancipation was forthcoming. The people went back to work and Sinda, in a fallen state, was "tremendously flogged."[27]

It is difficult to discern where one type of socioreligious leadership 175
562
562
554

175 567 554 000

began among the Gullahs and the other ended, or if in slavery a shared authority and governance was practiced. Among Windward Coast Africans authority rested with two bodies—the chief and his elders, and cultural authority, which consisted of Poro and Sande leaders. The latter was called the Poro Council. "All grave and problematic questions touching the interest of the section or tribe in general were handled by this Poro Council, and their decisions, after due deliberation, were preemptory." Among the BaKongo, governance was far more centralized and hierarchical. Authority was in the hands of a king, and on the village level, a chief, who might have advisers, among whom was a medicine man *(Nganga Nkisi)*.[28] But the importance of the priest in all African societies may explain the continued presence of the spiritual parents. Because spiritual parents, like their African counterparts, held their positions for life, and since they comprised the "religious court," they possibly represented the communal soul of the people while the elder personified the individual 175 554 575 soul in a more Christian context. From the spiritual leader a Gullah candidate not only received religious guidance but also instruction in conduct or "manners," thus preserving values as well as maintaining authority. Different social conditions make it impossible to actually compare types of instruction given to African and Gullah initiates. But in both situations such qualities as good conduct, allegiance, generosity, and group responsibility were emphasized. Secret society initiates received a rich background in physical survival, social interaction, instruction in ethnic-group history, and art. They were also schooled in their particular occupation for the future. For Gullah "seekers," instruction was probably a mixture of Christianity, Africanisms, and practical information. Candidates were taught how to pray, an interpretation of the nature of God and Christ, concepts about death, and especially about the realities of life, all within a context relevant to their circumstances as bondspeople.[29]

000 When African initiates left the bush, they returned to the village as "reborn," and were said to have "crossed the water." Their former existence was obliterated—old animosities, debts, even crimes no longer existed. The person was entering a new life with new responsibilities. Neophytes were expected to take their place in the village, to serve it when called upon, and to obey its regulations as interpreted by the Poro Council. When initiates were led back to the village, they underwent a washing ceremony in the creek or river. After "washing," new members were dressed up for their final return. Parents publicly expressed pride

in their offspring, sparing no expense in efforts to make the neophytes 000 as radiant as possible. After initiates were dressed in their new finery, they gathered in the meetinghouse with friends and family, "where in a public ceremony they are handed over to their parents with great acclamation."[30]

Among Gullahs, a "seeker" related an acceptable experience to the 175 ●
spiritual leader and declared a profession of faith to the Praise House 793
members. At an appointed time, the church elder and his "help" would 795
then further examine the individual to determine readiness for baptism.
Laura Towne witnessed such a prebaptismal examination on St. Helena: [787)

> . . . father Tom and his bench of elders examined candidates for baptism and asked Ellen to record their names. Each candidate clad in the oldest, dirtiest clothes, with a cloth band round their forehead stood humbly before the bench. Father Tom, looking like Jupiter, grave, powerful and awfully dignified put the most posing questions to which the candidates replied meekly but promptly. They asked the satisfactory candidate at last, "how do you pray." Then the soft, musical voice made the coaxing, entreating kind of prayer which they use so much, and a nod dismissed the applicant. Another was called up at once. There were seventy to be examined.[31]

Following examination, the candidates were ready for their water burial, which took place on communion Sunday morning. Teacher David Thorpe wrote of one occasion in 1863 when "upwards of one hundred and forty people," of all ages, were baptized. It was for him a "strange and picturesque scene." The people gathered from "far and near," in all manner of vehicles and "in every kind of attire." The candidates arrived "dressed for the water," according to Thorpe, "in miserable looking clothing," with their heads tied up in handkerchiefs. Nearby, among the bushes were mule carts loaded with garments for the converts to put on after the baptism. The white minister, Mr. Phillips, read off each candidate's name, and "Old Pa Tom" nodded his approval of their examination. All headed down to the water:

> The ceremony was performed by the roadside near a bridge where the road crossed the creek. "Siah" "leader" at "Good William Fripp's" took the arm of Mr. Phillips and together they entered the water. Around on every side were hundreds of people arrayed in their Sunday best. Their shiny black faces surmounted by bright turbans and white turbans. . . . They presented a beautiful sight today. Truly the sun shone out on a beautiful scene. . . . On the bridge in the crowd a few eager white faces could be seen peeping out, while on the grove near the water were other white friends . . . —near the water stood a large

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175
793
795

> band of singers and they sent up hymn after hymn during the exercises. Mr. Phillips and Siah went into the water. The Pastor extended his hands and his whole flock of candidates went forward into the water. Each one seemed to be attended by several friends or relatives, who besides being bodily support carried dry clothing, shawls, cloaks and overcoats. . . . They all gathered about the minister and Siah. Mr. Phillips took them in turn—each by one shoulder while Siah laid hold of the other and together they immersed them, over one hundred and forty. As fast as they had been baptized they stepped to the shore, though before they reached there, their friends received them and shuffled them up . . . and hurried them off into the bushes. It took a long time to get through with so many, but after a while it was over and we all went back to church. All the candidates came out in shiny robes. . . . There was a great difference in their looks when they came into the church the second time. Then we had a long service after which the right hand of fellowship was given and . . . the sacrament was administered to them.[32]

175
794
795
(171)

Resemblance is noted between the African secret society candidates' "turning out" and the Gullahs' "baptizin'." Both situations represented the emergence of a new individual whose status as a full member of the community was illustrated by a water burial. This new position was not only expressed by immersion but by the wearing of new garments and partaking of a communion service with family, friends, and, in the case of Gullahs, only "true believers" of the Baptist faith. In both instances the event was as impressive as it was significant. Like the new Christians, African initiates returning from the bush were considered "newborns from the belly of the Devil." All claims against them were forgiven and they were not responsible for any contract or behavior displayed prior to being devoured by the devil and reemerging as new beings.[33]

No ceremony symbolized an individual's initiation into the church and community more than baptism. For Gullahs, this had to be total immersion. Even those salves who joined the Methodist church usually insisted on total immersion rather than "mere sprinkling." Perhaps this preference was a latent memory of secret society initiation, with total immersion representing absolute commitment to the Gullahs' socioreligious culture. It is also possible that, as some Methodist missionaries believed, Gullahs were confident that "baptism by total immersion is a means of a present, full and eternal salvation; and that after you have been baptized, it is impossible to sin or fall from grace."[34] Yet the most significant feature of the Gullahs' attachment to total immersion may have been that this black community interpreted performance of the rite as symbolically

adding to a collective attitude in the quarters. Total immersion was exclusively 175
their way of being baptized and, although a Christian service, 794
the pomp, color, and ceremony was original to the slaves. The Gullahs' 795
method of baptism, with its solemn pageantry, had African antecedents
as well as Christian form. But more important, from the slaves' point of [567]
view, the rite was uniquely a prerequisite for community stature within
their own society.

Gullah efforts to construct an organized harmonious social system was 175
further illustrated by the fact that, while collective affiliation in the slave 794
quarters was most significant, a sense of individual fulfillment was also 795
essential. Hence, while "seekin'" culminated in acceptance of socialization 567
through church membership, the experience itself was a private one
and the desire to "seek Jesus" was a slave's personal decision, although 175
not devoid of community pressure. The travel, the visions, and the solitude 777
possibly represented a bondsperson's inner reflection and recognition 794
of "self" as opposed to his or her treatment as "thing" by the master. 567
Efforts toward acquiring a valuable self-image is related in the slave's
dependence on the spiritual parent who listened to and interpreted individual [787]
experiences. The significance of individual experience also had its
source in the personal attachment to and identification with Christ,
prophets, and disciples rather than to perceived abstractions and inapplicable
doctrines within Christianity. Moreover, Gullah cultural achievements
represent manifestations of individual creativity as well as collective
will and fortitude.

In the Gullah socioreligious community, exclusiveness served collective 175
goals perhaps in the way that secrecy in Poro and Sande expressed 794
loyalty, solidarity, and trust. One illustration of this was the practice of 779
close communion among Gullahs. Close communion was actually an elitist
doctrine which the slaves apparently adopted from their Calvinist- 567
oriented Baptist slavemasters. American Missionary Association ministers 797
stated that the Gullahs practiced close communion before they came.
"I find that the colored people understand the doctrine of 'close communion'
perfectly well," wrote the Reverend Augustine Roots from Port
Royal in 1863. "I have however said, myself nothing about the matter of
communion." This was not the opinion of Laura Towne. She related
that a white Baptist minister, Mr. Horton, informed the Gullahs that no
one "who taught different doctrines" had any right "even to stand in the
pulpit." Horton further told the Gullahs that those with different reli-

● 175 794 779 567 797 gious persuasions "had no right" to come to church communion. Many Northern teachers were Unitarians. Others followed no faith. Still, they enjoyed the Gullah church services and felt that the bondspeople wanted them at communion. In any case a denominational feud erupted in the occupied area. Some Gullahs did not agree with the exclusion practice, and insisted that white antebellum Baptists and Episcopalians even communed together in the Sea Island region, and no doctrinal proscription was made. "So," wrote Towne, "Mr. Horton has not the excuse he gave for his course, that it was already established." After creating the issue Mr. Horton left the region and Mr. Phillips came in his place. Phillips sided with Northern teachers and missionaries. Towne, a Unitarian, stated that the "Reverend Mr. Phillips was here today and says the elders asked by what right we stayed to communion." Phillips interceded on behalf of the teachers, but met firm resistance. "Mr. Phillips . . . says the elders decided to exclude us from communion," related Towne. Later, the teachers continued to press the issue with an influential Gullah leader:

> Nelly had today, I think, a long talk with Demas upon close communion, but he was immovable, as might be supposed. He did not think much of the theological arguments of a girl like Nelly; and he is perfectly unbending by nature.[33]

For a people whose knowledge of Christian doctrine was marginal, and whose spiritual nature was one of warmth and generosity, it was uncharacteristic of the Gullahs to embrace staunchly such a rigid theological doctrine. If close communion was not a concept introduced to the Gullahs by Baptist masters, their use of the concept is even more interesting and further illustrates their adaptive capacity. Yet it was practiced all over the region. Gullahs continued to follow the close communion model, scolding members who worshiped outside of their religious structure. While they frequently invited and always welcomed white Northern missionaries and others to "jine praise wid we," the Gullahs remained adamant about refusing communion to those not of their faith. 175 794 567 779 Perhaps Gullahs interpreted the ritualistic sacrament as a private ceremony among church members and believed that its usefulness in fostering unity and harmony among believers was best served by keeping others out of fellowship. This included white non-Baptists as well as black nonbelievers. The one construst resembling law, custom, practice, and system that Gullahs could consider their own was their religious societies and the beliefs contained therein. Black societies were indeed "invisible

institutions," and they were controlled from within. While confusion and 175
vacillation occurred in other areas, within Gullah black societies there 794
was organization, structure, and a cameraderie transferable to the slave 567
quarters. Religion was their "fixed point" and the one realm where they 779
needed authority if a group attitude was to be maintained. The concept
of close communion was not completely new, given the African heritage.
And black elders insisted that only members of the societies had a right
to fellowship, for probably no event more symbolized integration of the
individual into the socioreligious connection than acceptance of the elements
representing the mystical blood and body of Christ. This ritual
bound members of the various societies. The more exclusive the event,
the more it impressed upon the communicants the responsibilities entailed.
By joining society, Praise House, and church, an individual became
a full participant in the community. Communion service epitomized
this relationship. Communion was not only a method of initiating
new converts into the socioreligious connection, but a way of reminding
old members of their commitments. In addition to being "de Ark ob
Safety" in the spiritual sense, communion was possibly a conduct agreement,
restricting antisocial behavior yet inspiring a feeling of personal
status very much in the way that Poro and Sande did in West Africa.
Gullahs and Africans used their religion to fulfill sacred and secular communal [774
needs in similar ways. In both instances the main emphasis was 771)
on community preservation. In each case an institution evolved that initiated
individuals into society and committed them to abide by the customs,
beliefs, and practices of the group for the sake of unity and order,
while not ignoring the members' need to maintain a sense of self.

Once the candidates were baptized and given communion, they were 175
then members of the black society and the plantation Praise House. This 567
new status gave former candidates the right to participate in the ring 794
shout which was held at the praise meeting or in the home of the individual 796
considered to be the most pious. One of the earliest available antebellum
description of the ring shout was provided by Charles Lyell,
who traveled through the South Carolina and Georgia Sea Islands in
1848. According to Lyle, on the Hopeton plantation of James Hamilton
Couper, over twenty violins were silenced by the Methodist missionaries. [797)
Thus was music and dancing, the slaves' chief form of merrymaking,
prohibited. Yet Methodists did allow slaves to engage in a form of physical
exercise after prayer meetings, hence the origin of the "shout":

> 175 At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted to move round rapidly
> 567 in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting the right hand and
> 794 then the left, in which maneuver, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take
> 796 enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being in fact a kind of
> 797 spiritual boulanger.[36]

Physical expressions of religious fervor had been a feature of eighteenth-century Methodism. But the phenomenon had for the most part disappeared by the time of the Methodist slave conversion movement. While most Methodist missionaries frowned upon slaves' religious expressions, others heeded the instruction of William Capers, superintendent of missions, to allow the slaves to "be themselves" in matters of worship, so long as they abided by the discipline.[37] Hence, although worldly entertainment was forbidden, in some cases religious exercise was not. Baptist planters may have permitted the shout to exist because they saw no harm in such behavior and recognized the therapeutic effects of such "periodic releases." Thus, the shout ritual, among other
[154] things, can be seen as a cathartic which enabled slaves to act out tensions, anxieties, and suppressed facets of themselves in an approved manner.

While Gullahs considered the shout to be a religious, even Christian practice, it was their own creation. At the Praise House, shouts only took place after service had ended and the benediction announced. Also,
[533] while Gullahs sang Methodist and Baptist hymns at the praise meetings, when time came for a shout, the slaves sang only their own spirituals.[38]

Some accounts of the shout indicate that three or four people stood
175 and sang, clapping and gesticulating, while others shuffled along on their
567 heels, following each other in a circle, bending the knees slightly. The
796 movements began slowly, a few going around and others joining in vo-
cally and kinetically, while the song became faster and faster, "till at last
786 only the most marked part of the refrain is sung and the shuffling, stamping
535 and clapping get furious." According to Laura Towne, the floor shook
533 dangerously, swaying rhythmically in time with the song. The dancers
would get out of breath only after long periods of time, rest for awhile, and begin again, as the several outside of the ring kept up the singing. Charlotte Forten, a black teacher from the North, added color and imagery to the shout scene she witnessed:

> . . . at the close of the Praise-Meeting, they all shake hands in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout" during

> which they sing their own hymns. . . . The first shout that we witnessed . . . 175
> impressed us very much. The large gloomy room, with its blackened walls—the 567
> wild whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered 796
> around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be 786
> controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine—and
> over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light 535
> around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts
> of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, 533
> not soon to be forgotten.[39]

Only members of the Praise House could join in the ring shout. Children 175
were taught the shout at a very early age but never allowed to 794
participate in or attend religious gatherings where the shout was performed 796
until they became Praise House members. Once membership (869)
was attained, the new converts were welcomed into the Praise House by
the opportunity to lead the ring shout and illustrate their ability.[40]

Most Northern teachers were at first appalled when they observed the 175
shout. "I never saw anything so savage," wrote Laura Towne. "They 796
call it a religious ceremony, but it seems more like a regular frolic to me." "The shout reminds one of a pagan performance," wrote a Ladies Island teacher. Arthur Sumner referred to it as "a strange, barbaric Central-African dance and song." Yet Gullahs insisted that the shout was religious and that each movement and step had spiritual significance. The steps never changed and even after freedom the shout was not altered by maneuvers that might have been learned at a "worldly dance." A watchful leader made sure that the feet were never crossed. Some whites, after coming to know and understand the Gullahs, reversed their initial critical stance. Laura Towne spent the rest of her life with the Gullahs after going there during the Civil War. She grew to love and respect the Gullahs enough to appreciate their forms of expression. "Went to a fine shout today," she wrote in her diary after a few years' stay on the Sea Islands.[41]

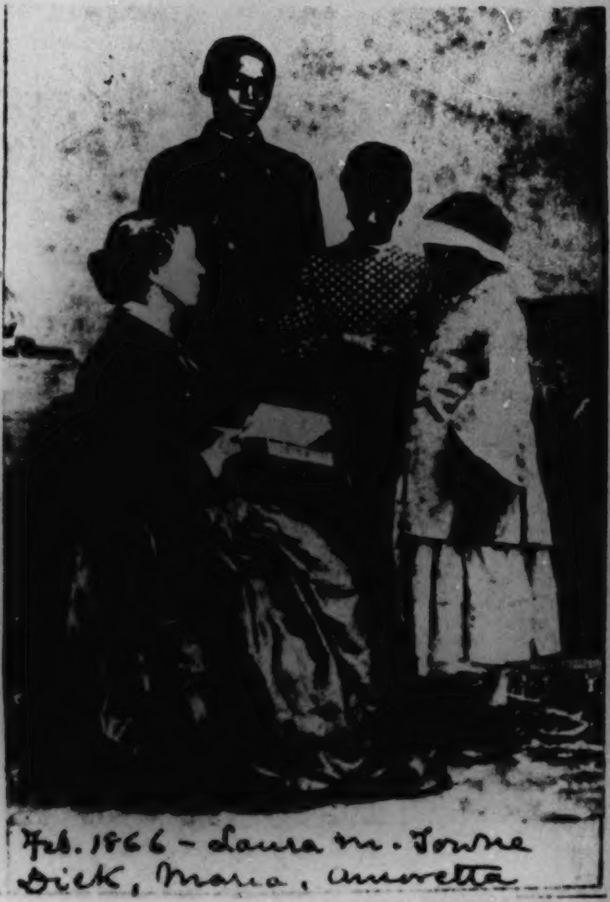
The Gullah ring shout, like the travel and the vision, involved an altered 175
state of consciousness and had the attributes of "possession." It 796
represented either an unusual behavior inspired and controlled by an 786
outside agent, in this case the Holy Spirit, or the outside agent displaced 789
the individual's personality and acted in its stead.[42] The background of the Gullah ring shout, a manifestation of possession trance, was West African in origin and an important characteristic of the initiation process.

175 796 567 [786 tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor. The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

771 567 177 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of communal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plantation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spiritual and communal sense. [178 By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175
142
291


Feb. 1866 – Laura M. Towne
Dick, Maria, Amoretta

Laura M. Towne, Dick, Maria, and "seeker" Amoretta, February 1866. From the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. (Courtesy of the New York Public Library.)

[p. 306]

Epilogue

Slavery chain done broke at last!
Broke at last! Broke at last!
Slavery chain done broke at last!
Gonna praise God till I die!

Way up in that valley,
Pray-in' on my knees,
Tell-in' God a-bout my troubles,
And to help me if He please.

I did tell him how I suffer,
In the dungeon and the chain;
And the days I went with head bowed down,
An' my broken flesh and pain.

I did know Jesus heard me, 539
'Cause the spirit spoke to me,
An' said, "Rise, my chile, your children
An' you too shall be free."

I done 'p'int one mighty captain
For to marshal all my hosts;
An' to bring my bleeding ones to me,
An' not one shall be lost."

Now no more weary trav'lin',
'Cause my Jesus set me free,
An' there's no more auction block for me
*Since He give me liberty.**

The Thirteenth Amendment, which ended all slavery in the United States, 175
barely slipped through the House of Representatives with the necessary 567
two-thirds vote on January 31, 1865. But for the Gullahs, the "Year of
Jubilo" was January 1, 1863, when Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation
Proclamation declared them "forever free." It was the first truly Happy 175
New Year the Gullahs ever had, and they marked it with a festive oc- 541
casion organized by General Saxton. The celebration took place in Beau-
fort. The multitude consisted of the "First South" Regiment, many "white 567
visitors," superintendants, officers, dignitaries, and the band of the Eighth
Maine. From the Islands and surrounding mainland came the now for-

---

* Quoted from Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 167.

•175 541 567 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads, and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army). All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 567 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Americans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 771 177 178 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a successful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

APPENDIX A

Ethnic Origins of Carolina Slaves

This appendix explains my own tabulations for ethnic origins of Carolina 127
slaves. A valuable source of information for studying African origins was 567
published in four volumes by Elizabeth Donnan. Her works are based
on primary sources consisting of ships' records, newspaper advertisements, 175•
records of the Royal African Company, the correspondence of Henry Laurens and other merchants, and various documents illustrating the pattern and magnitude of the international slave trade. Donnan's volume on the Southern colonies was particularly useful for examining the slave trade to Carolina because the records of that colony were so well preserved and because white Carolinians made a fetish of regional provenance where human cargo was concerned. From these data we obtain an impression of the coastal origins of many cargoes entering Charleston harbor, and it appears that Africans of the Windward Coast and Senegambia regions provided South Carolina with the majority of its forced laborers for nearly forty years.

Table A.1 represents my calculation of the ethnic origins of slaves 175
entering South Carolina during the middle period of the international 567
slave trade. It was compiled from a tabulation of lists of cargoes published 128
by Elizabeth Donnan. Table A.2 is a rough numerical calculation of slaves identifiable by African origins entering Charleston during the middle period of the trade. Since many cargoes did not indicate size, our estimate for this unknown was based upon the average number of slaves on vessels which did indicate the size of their cargo. Deliberately ex-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

TABLE A.1

●175
567

Number and Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)

Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*Percentage*
Senegambia	102	32.4
Windward Coast	90	28.6
Gold Coast	54	17.2
Bight of Benin		
Bight of Biafra	25	7.9
Angola (including Gaboon and the Kongo)	35	11.1
Others: Whydah, Bance Island, Isle de Los	9	2.8
Total	315	100.0

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935) vol. 4, passim; and *South Carolina Gazette*.

TABLE A.2

Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1749 to 1787 (Middle Period)

	Cargoes with Numerical Count		*Cargoes without Numerical Count*			
Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*No. of Slaves*	*No. of Cargoes*	*Est. Slaves*	*Total Cargoes*	*Total Slaves (Est.)*
Senegambia	66	10,499	36	5,724	102	16,223
Windward Coast	65	11,135	25	4,275	90	15,410
Gold Coast	37	6,240	17	2,856	54	9,096
Angola	33	7,400	2	454	35	7,934
Bight of Benin						
Bight of Biafra	18	3,343	7	1,302	25	4,665
Others	7	956	2	274	9	1,230
Total	226	39,653	89	14,885	315	54,538

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

175
567
128

cluded from tables A.1 and A.2 are those vessels which indicated only the West Indies as the source of origin. Such listings meant the slaves were purchased in the West Indies from an arriving African cargo, or that the ship had stopped in the West Indies and disposed of most of its African cargo. Cargoes listed as simply from the West Indies were usually quite small and often contained Creole New World-born slaves.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175
567
[114]

As discussed in the text, research indicates that the majority of slaves in Carolina by 1740 were chiefly from Kongo-Angola. This was also the largest group imported into South Carolina during the entire slave trade as illustrated in table A.3, which was taken from Philip D. Curtin's *Atlantic Slave Trade*. However, Curtin's percentages may be misleading for purposes of examining African cultural influence in coastal Carolina because he lumps the entire slave trade period together. Up to 1740, the end of the first period of the Carolina trade, Kongo-Angolans were the majority. But as evident from tables A.1 and A.2, during the period of high economic growth and large-scale slave importation in the Sea Island region, these Africans composed a relatively small percentage of total cargoes with known coastal origins. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region do not again figure heavily in South Carolina trade until the nineteenth century. Curtin has no separate breakdown for these years (1804–1807), when many Kongo-Angola peoples were imported (see tables A.4 and A.5) chiefly, but not exclusively, for the benefit of up-country plantations and new territories. At the time, South Carolina was the only state importing slaves and supplied other states as well. In the nineteenth century, despite the emergence of Sea Island cotton as an export of growing significance, many coastal and Sea Island planters were well supplied with slaves and expressed strong hostility to reopening of the international trade in 1803. Concerned about the depreciation of their own slave property, as well as the prospect of slave revolts, these planters were instrumental in the near-defeat of the bill to reopen the African slave

TABLE A.3

Percentage of Slaves of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1733 to 1807

Coastal Region of Origin	*Percentage*
Senegambia	19.5
Windward Coast (including Sierra Leone)	23.1
Gold Coast	13.3
Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra	3.7
Angola	39.6
Mozambique, Madagascar	0.7
Total	100.0

Source: Philip D. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison-University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 157, Table 45.

•175
567

TABLE A.4

Percentage of Cargoes of Identifiable Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)

Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*Percentage*
Senegambia	11	7.5
Windward Coast	44.5	30.5
Gold Coast	23.5	16.0
Bright of Benin, Bight of Biafra	3	2.0
Angola	55	37.7
Others	9	6.3
Total	90.0	100.0

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 4, passim.

TABLE A.5

Numerical Estimate of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1804 to 1807 (Final Period)

	Cargoes with Numerical Count		*Cargoes without Numerical Count*			
Coastal Region of Origin	*No. of Cargoes*	*No. of Slaves*	*No. of Cargoes*	*No. of Slaves*	*Total Cargoes*	*Total Slaves (Est.)*
Senegambia	4	290	6	73	10	435
Windward Coast	33	4,374	16	2,096	49	6,470
Gold Coast	16	2,416	7	1,057	23	3,624
Angola	50	14,440	5	1,694	55	16,134
Bight of Benin Bight of Biafra	6	1,809	1	301	7	2,412
Others	2	473	—	—	2	473
Total	111	23,802	40	5,221	151	29,023

Source: Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents*, vol v. 4, passim.

(114) trade in South Carolina. Thus, Philip Curtin's percentages, which cover the years 1733–1807, are too broad chronologically to adequately represent the pattern of the slave trade in regard to cultural geography.

175
567
114

In *The Myth of the Negro Past*, Melville J. Herskovits provided what appeared to be a good source of ethnic information. Using raw material supplied by Elizabeth Donnan, Herskovits developed a numerical tabulation of slave imports into South Carolina for the years 1733–1785 in

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

TABLE A.6
Number of Slaves Identifiable by Origin Imported from 1733 to 1785 (Middle Period)

175•
567

Coastal Region of Origin	*No. Imported*
Origin given as "Africa"	4,146
From the Gambia to Sierra Leone	12,441
Sierra Leone	3,906
Rice and Grain Coasts	3,851
"Guinea Coast" (Gold Coast to Calabar)	18,240*
Angola	11,485
Congo	10,924
Mozambique	243
East Africa	230
Total Imported from Africa	65,466
Total Imported from the West Indies	2,303
Total Number of Imports	67,796

*Herskovits notes that of this number only 1,168 slaves were brought in ships sailing from "Benin," "Bonny," "New Calabar," and "Old Calabar." Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 305 n.

Source: Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston-Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.) p. 48.

order to determine ethnic origin and influence among Africans imported into that state (see table A.6). However, Herskovits' computation somewhat confuses the issue of provenance in regard to the Sea Island region because it is based only on the available number of slaves from various regions rather than on the number of cargoes as well, and the percentage of cargoes from a particular area. In many cases, neither Donnan nor the Charleston newspapers (which were her main source) reported the number of slaves in a given cargo. Donnan's information on total yearly imports was not based on individual computation but derived from annual figures printed in newspapers that did not distribute imports on the basis of coastal origin. Thus, Herskovits apparently tabulated only cargoes which listed the African *coastal origin* and indicated the *size* of the cargo as well. This makes his numerical tabulation unreliable. 175 567 114

Another problem with Herskovits' tabulation for this study is that his estimates partly cover the period in which the Sea Islands were only sparsely settled (the early period). Hence, we cannot obtain a clear indication of the ethnic origins of Sea Island Gullahs from Herskovits' information. It seems that a more reasonable estimated of sources of or- 175 567

175 igin can be obtained by using the *number* of cargoes of known African
567 origin, as is done in table A.1, rather than using *cargo size* as a primary indicator. Yet, both table A.1 and table A.2 illustrate that during the middle period of the slave trade a large, new migrant group was added to the African-Carolinian population.

APPENDIX C

Baptist Churches

TABLE C.1

State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833

795
162
175●

Churches	*Constituted*	*Number Baptized*	*Membership*
* 1 Euhaw	1745	43	841
2 Beach Branch	1759	65	132
3 Healing Springs	1772	7	143
* 4 Pipe Creek	1776	38	287
5 Treadaway	1776	6	66
6 Columbia	1780	2	115
* 7 Black Swamp	1786	11	294
8 Great Saltcatcher	1793	59	127
9 Barnwell	1803	13	126
10 Springtown	1803	66	244
*11 Beaufort	1804	239	1,292
12 Rosemary	1804	11	114
13 Willow Swamp	1805	0	34
14 Union	1805	7	220
15 Little Saltcatcher	1807	21	50
*16 St. Helena	1809	138	536
*17 May River	1811	36	621
18 Beulah	1811	0	20
*19 Prince Williams	1813	70	140
20 Steep Bottom	1814	3	44
21 Cypress Creek	1814	41	144
22 Double Ponds	1825	1	58
23 Philadelphia	1827	9	75
24 Kirkland	1827	12	162
25 Black Creek	1827	69	111
26 M't Pleasant	1828	4	38

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

795
162
•175

TABLE C.1 *(continued)*

State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833

Churches	*Constituted*	*Number Baptized*	*Membership*
27 3 Mile Creek	1829	29	64
28 Matlock	1830	0	33
29 Bethesda	1830	8	30
30 Steel Creek	1830	23	71
31 Joico's Branch	1831	3	30
32 Ebenezer	1831	3	21
33 Coosawatchie	1832	34	196
34 Beach Island	1832	0	38
*35 Hilton Head	1832	86	212
36 Sardia	1833	14	33
37 Pleasant Prospect	1833	0	43
Total		471	6,805

*Beauford District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands.

Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association, November 23, 1833, 11, BC.

TABLE C.2

State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1842

Churches	*Number Baptized*	*Membership*	*By Whom Supplied*
*Euhaw	. . . No Report . . .		W. A. Lawton
Beach Branch	0	71	E. Estes
Healing Springs	1	104	D. Peeples
*Pipe Creek	12	131	I. Nicholes
Treadaway	1	31	H. D. Duncan
Columbia	17	141	L. M. Brown
*Black Swamp	13	278	George Kempton
Great Saltcatcher	18	130	James Fant
Barnwell	2	140	D. Peeples, M. Shoares
Springtown	0	183	L. B. Brown
*Beaufort	152	1,947	R. Fuller
Rosemary	0	111	D. Peeples
Union	8	240	H. Z. Ardis
Little Saltcatcher	0	70	George Walker
*St. Helena	61	762	W. Hall
*May River	30	888	W. A. Lawton
*Prince Williams	. . . No Report . . .		L. G. Bowers

795
162
175●

Churches	*Number Baptized*	*Membership*	*By Whom Supplied*
Deep Bottom	1	33	C. J. Robert
Cypress Creek	0	37	I. Nix
Philadelphia	4	87	L. M. Brown
Smyrna	3	207	M. Shoares
Black Creek	. . . No Report . . .		(No Pastor)
Mount Pleasant	. . . No Report . . .		(No Pastor)
St. John's	1	3	George Walker
Matlock	0	9	(No Pastor)
Bethesda	0	57	William Baxley
Steel Creek	19	131	H. Z. Ardis
Joico's Branch	25	73	H. D. Duncan
*Coosawhatchie	. . . No Report . . .		H. D. Duncan
Beach Island	5	189	H. Z. Ardis
Friendship	0	66	(No Pastor)
*Hilton Head	. . . No Report . . .		(No Pastor)
Sardia	9	34	John Youmans
Pleasant Prospect	. . . No Report . . .		(No Pastor)
Sandy Run	11	61	J. Fant
Gent's Branch	9	32	(No Pastor)
Beaver Dam	1	43	John Youmans
M't Temperance	. . . No Report . . .		(No Pastor)
Long Beach	. . . No Report . . .		J. Munch
Beulah	14	51	J. Fant
Union, Colleton	0	20	W. Price, B. Ferguson
Mount Aaron	2	33	Joseph A. Lawton
Three Lower Runs	2	39	Joseph A. Lawton
Doctor's Creek, Colleton	0	76	(No Pastor)
Total	421	6,508	

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near Sea Islands.

Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association, November 26, 1842, 16, BC.

TABLE C.3

State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851

Churches	*Baptized*	*Black Members*	*White Members*	*Total*
*Euhaw	8	442	32	474
Beach Branch	12	70	64	140
Healing Springs	0	23	31	54
*Pipe Creek	20	No Breakdown		179
Columbia	0	No Breakdown		146

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

TABLE C.3 *(continued)*

State of the Churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1851

795
162
175

Churches	Baptized	Black Members	White Members	Total
*Black Swamp	10	259	64	323
Great Saltcatcher	0	43	106	149
Barnwell	1	71	3	105
Springtown	8	73	107	180
*Beaufort	32	2,477	196	2,673
Rosemary	3	20	98	118
Union	6	148	39	187
Little Saltcatcher	4	17	162	179
*St. Helena	16	866	34	900
*May River	25	510	30	540
Steep Bottom	9	54	38	92
Cypress Creek	0	14	46	60
Philadelphia	9	120	10	130
Smyrna	7	223	43	266
St. John's	0	6	30	36
Matlock	20	26	70	96
Bethesda	9	11	91	102
Steel Creek	2	64	11	75
Joico's Branch	0	1	57	58
*Coosawhatchie	29	258	38	296
Beach Island	19	22	38	60
Friendship	0	No Breakdown		90
*Hilton Head	1	106	2	108
Black Creek, Colleton	0	No Breakdown		104
Pleasant Prospect	5	No Breakdown		57
Sandy Run	17	44	56	100
Gent's Branch	0	7	38	45
Beaver Dam	0	1	40	41
Long Beach	3	12	75	87
Union, Colleton	0	No Breakdown		25
Mount Aaron	0	3	37	40
Lower Three Runs	1	No Breakdown		38
Doctor's Creek, Colleton	8	No Breakdown		47
Round O	0	No Breakdown		48
Great Swamp	0	15	18	33
Blackville	0	15	55	70
Sand Hill	10	No Breakdown		35
Bedon's	0	No Breakdown		44
Peniel	12	No Breakdown		66
Mount Olive	2	6	17	23

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

795
162
175

Churches	*Baptized*	*Black Members*	*White Members*	*Total*
Cypress Chapel	0	0	22	22
Bethel	0	No Breakdown		12
Beulah	0	25	7	32
Total	308	6,052	1,805	9,282

*Beaufort District churches with large memberships and which are on or near the Sea Islands. These churches claimed 4,918 members out of a total black membership return of 6,052. Most of the 4,918 blacks were members of the Sea Island congregations at Beaufort, St. Helena, May River, and Hilton Head.

Source: Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association, November 22, 1851, 20, BC.

121 567 27. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness, Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973), 46–59.

113 28. Ibid.; Arthur P. Mendel, ed., *Essential Works of Marxism* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 15–16.

29. John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972 ed.), 200–201.

30. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 329–88, 441.

31. Ibid., xvii.

113 32. John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 2–3.

Prologue

1. Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3, 19–22, 78; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 112, 130; Paul Quattlebaum, *The Land Called Chicora* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1958), 86–88.

175 567 2. The spelling of Kongo with a K instead of C is used by some Africanists. It refers to the traditional, unitary civilization and way of life of BaKongo peoples. The C spelling represents the political shift that occurred with white colonial penetration and partition in Central Africa. Traditional Kongo civilization includes modern Bas-Zaire, neighboring Cabinda, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, and Northern Angola. The ancient civilization was once under the united suzerainty of the kingdom of Kongo. The language is KiKongo, although dialects vary widely in this Bantu-speaking world of Africa. The numerous ethnic groups and some neighboring ones share cultural and religious traditions. They also share memories of the trials and tears left in the wake of centuries of transatlantic trade in slaves. 113 John M. Janzen and Wyatt MacGaffey, *An Anthology of Kongo Religion: Primary Texts from Lower Zaire* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Publications in Anthropology, No. 5, 1974), 1–3; Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 11; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 30–36, 44–45, 134–35, 411.

101 113 3. *SCG*, March 27, 1742; Reed Smith, "Gullah," *A Reprint of Bulletin #190 of the University of South Carolina* (Columbia: State Printing Co., 1926), 3–4; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 31.

199 113 4. Smith, "Gullah," 3–4; *SCA*, December 22 and 29, 1843; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 54, 57. Peter Wood also suggests that perhaps Gullah derived from a "multiple etymology." See *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974), 172, n. 12.

174 5. Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.).

114 113 6. See reviews and discussions by Raven I. McDavid, Jr., *Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America* 26 (April–June, 1950): 323–32, and Morris Swadish, *Word: Journal*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 •

1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC. 113

18. Charles Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC. See also Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 218–19; Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), I: 244–45; *SCA*, July 14, 1863 and December 29, 1843; Allen Diary, 18, 127–28, 151–54. [567)

19. For an extensive bibliography on works about Gullahs and the need for more modern approaches, see Mary A. Twining, "Sources in the Folklore and Folklife of the Sea Islands," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 39 (1975): 135–50; In 1980 the *Journal of Black Studies* devoted an entire issue to Sea Island culture. Twining and Baird, eds., *Journal of Black Studies*; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, passim; Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), passim. 113

20. Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, SCHS; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 291; Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," quoted in Edwin C. Holland, *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institution and Existence of Slavery among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79; Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed. and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), 13–14, 76–79; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row. 1965), 72–76; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860" (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16–17; Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Henry Irving Tragle, *The Southampton Slave Revolt of 1831: A Compilation of Source Materials* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971); Rev. Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism Among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 79–79. 175 567 668 797 113

21. Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 16–18; 80; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), passim; Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism*, 13–34, HSSCC; Report of the Board of Managers of the South Carolina Missionary Society, in *SCA*, January 3, 1851. 175 567 797 113

1. Gullah Roots

1. James Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers: A Study of the Atlantic Slave Traders, 1441–1807* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 38; Daniel Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 34–36; Basil Davidson, *The African Slave Trade: Precolonial History, 1450–1850*, 175 113

● 175 113 originally published as *Black Mother* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1961), 105; Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958; repr. from 1941 ed.), 34–40; Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), passim; Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley, *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518–1865* (New York: Viking Press, 1969), 14–20; The term Upper Guinea Coast has altered over centuries. Here our definition is taken from Walter Rodney, *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 2, 7; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America*, 4 vols. (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1935), vol. 4, *The Southern Colonies*, passim; Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1975), 58–60.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 131; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156; Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution," *American Historical Review* 33 (1927–28): 816–17; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave Trade* (London: James, John and Paul Knapton, 1734; London: Frank Cass, 1971), 173–74; William Smith, *A Voyage to Guinea* (London: John Nourse, 1744; London: Frank Cass, 1967), 135; William Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, trans. John Ralph Willis (Holland, 1704; 4th English ed., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967), 56–68; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes*, 17–18; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 35; Pope-Hennessy, *Sins of Our Fathers*, 58–59.

3. Donnan, *Documents*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, 282.

4. Ibid., II:xxxi–xxxiii, 355; IV:301, 382.

5. Wood, *Black Majority*, 301–4, Appendix C, 333–41.

6. Douglas L. Wheeler and Rene Pelissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 28–51; Davidson, *African Trade*, 144–52; Donnan, *Documents*, II:xvii–xviii; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37. Roger Bastide has written that the official documents concerning the Portuguese trade were burned after slavery was suppressed "in an effort to expunge a blot on the country's escutcheon." See Roger Bastide, *African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpretations of Civilizations*, trans. Helen Sebba (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1978). 33.

7. Jan Vansina, "Long Distance Trade Routes in Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 375–90; Walter Rodney, "Slavery and Other Forms of Social Oppression on the Upper Guinea Coast in the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Journal of African History* 8, no. 3 (1966): 431, 440; Quoted from Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 37–38.

8. Vansina, "Trade Routes," 375–83; Lorenzo D. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1949 ed.), passim; Winifred Vass, *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, 1979), 9–19. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Herskovits, *Negro Past*, 38; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 157, Table 45.

[567] (669) 9. Wheeler and Pelissier, *Angola*, 6–10; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; H. P. Junod, *Bantu Heritage* (Johannesburg: Hortors, 1938; Westport, Conn.: Negro University Press, 1970), 59–67, 82–102, 125–33; Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 103; *Gentleman's Magazine* 35 (October 1764): 487; Leila Sellers, *Charleston Business on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), 143; Augustine Smyth et al., *The Carolina Low Country* (New York: Macmillan, 1931) 173; Vass, *Bantu Heritage*, 3–5; Wood, *Black Majority*, 96–130, 195–217, 272–326; Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 11–15.

10. Wood, *Black Majority*, 52–153, 324–35. From 1741 to 1743 a prohibitive duty was imposed. In 1744 four African cargoes arrived. No slave cargoes entered Charleston in 1745 and from 1746 and 1748 another prohibitive duty was in effect. Three African cargoes arrived in 1749 and 1750, respectively. By 1752 the trade was once again in full swing. Donnan, "Slave Trade before the Revolution," 807–8; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 9–10; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 42–43.

175
113
567
[669]

11. Wood, *Black Majority*, 148, 323; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 69–70; 72; Converse D. Clowse, *Economic Beginnings in Colonial South Carolina, 1730–1760* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 206, 230–32. Rice was never raised to any large extent on the Sea Islands since salt water in poisonous to the rice plant. Some Sea Islands did have a few fresh water ponds where rice was grown, but the amount was small and only for local consumption. Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of the North Carolina Press, 1930), 18; Frederick V. Emerson, "Geographical Influences in American Slavery," *Geographical Society Bulletin* 63 (1911): 108–9.

[669

12. William A. Schaper, *Sectionalism and Representation in South Carolina* (New York: DaCapo Press, 1968), 51; Emerson, "Geographical Influences," 108–11; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 386–88; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 35, 37, 46–47; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina, 1728–1765*, (Kingsport, Tenn.: Southern Publishers, 1940), 37–38; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 84; Peter Wood offers interesting evidence which points to Africans' immunity to certain diseases, such as malaria. Yet, as he states, this was not "absolute." Moreover, Todd L. Savitt notes that malaria certainly took its toll in human losses among slaves. He maintains that some blacks did possess an inherited immunity to one or another strain of malaria. But adds that even adult African-born slaves had to go through a "seasoning" period because the "strains of malarial parasites in this country differed from those in their native lands." The "acquired" immunity that blacks reportedly developed was "risky," according to Savitt, since this involved repreated, uninterrupted exposure to malaria over a period of years. Furthermore, we must rely heavily on the words of colonial whites with a vested interest in rationalizing that blacks were more suited to labor in the Carolina swamps and marshes. Africans may have had a varied immunity to certain diseases, but it appears unlikely that this determined white attitudes toward black labor. For Wood, See *Black Majority* 85–88, 90–91. See also Todd L. Savitt, *Medicine and Slavery: The Diseases and Health Care of Blacks in Antebellum Virginia* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illiois Press, 1978), 21–26.

13. Schaper, *Sectionalism* 55–56; Emerson, "Georgraphical Influences," 112; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 40–46; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–19; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 267–69; Donnan, *Documents*, IV: passim; See Appendix A.

14. Ellen Gibson Wilson, *The Loyal Blacks* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976), 48; Philip M. Hamer, et al. eds., *Papers of Henry Laurens*, 10 vols. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), IV: 294–95.

175
113

15. *SCG*, July 14, 1759.

16. Hamer, *Laurens Papers*, I:252, 331.

175 113 [197] [177]

17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114. Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

[567]

20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," [illegible]1; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

17 113

21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

175 113

23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

175•
113

from 1788 ed.), 13, 18, 74–75, 91–95, 141–42; Corry, *Windward Coast*, 94–95; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 3–7; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 232–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 2–3, 5–6, 9, 65; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), xiv. 226.

28. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 236–53; Appendix A.

29. Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), Paul, 1951); 28–29, 37–39; Fyfe, *Sierra Leone*, 5–6.

30. Higgins, "Georgraphical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), 45–46; Sir Harry Johnston, *Liberia*, 2 vols. (London: Hutchinson, 1906), I: 107–10; II: 921–24, 947–48, 1095–96: Warren L. d'Azevedo, "The Setting of Gola Society and Culture: Some Theoretical Implications of Variation in Time and Space," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* (Berkeley: University of California, 1959), 21, 51.

31. d'Azevedo, "Gola Society and Culture," 55–59; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 255.

32. Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Denwoin People* (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior 1955) 140–42; and *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) I: 2–3; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 255.

33. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 253.

34. Diary of William F. Allen, 63, in William F. Allen Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconisn, Madison; Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–84, 87; Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 20–21.

2. *The Socioreligious Heritage*

171
113

1. Warren L. d'Azevedo, "The Setting of Gola Society and Culture: Some Theoretical Implications of Variation in Time and Space," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* (Berkeley: University of California, 1959), 43–45, 67–68; Walter Rodney, A *History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 32–33, 65; Kenneth Little, *The Mende of Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), 7–8, 240–42, and "The Poro Society as Arbiter of Culture," *African Studies* 7 (March, 1948): 1; M. McCulloch, *Peoples of Sierra Leone* (London: International African Institute, 1950), 29–37, 68–69, 81–82, 93; George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University* 19 (1941): 6; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), Chapters 5–9; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Denwoin People* (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955), 17, 24–32; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), 140–51.

2. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 32–33, 65–67; Kenneth Little, "The Political Function of the Poro," Part I, *Africa* 35 (October, 1965): 349–50.

3. Nicholas Owen, *Journal of A Slave Dealer, A View of Some Remarkable Axedents in the Life of Nicholas Owen on the Coast of Africa and America From the Year 1746 to the Year 1757* (London: George Routledge, 1930), 30–31.

4. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr. from 1788 ed.), 82–83.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

26. Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27A, 27B, WPA, SCL; Lowrey, *Old Plantation*, 83–87; Towne Diary, 98; Elsie Clews Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass.: American Folk-lore Society 1923), 211–13; E. Horace Fitchett, "Superstitions in South Carolina," *The Crisis* 43 (1936): 360–71; Henry F. Davis, "Folklore in South Carolina," *Journal of American Folklore* 27 (1914): 245–49; Leonora Herron and Alice M. Bacon, "Conjuring and Conjure Doctors," *Southern Workman* 24 (1895): 118; Louis Pendleton, "Notes on Negro Folklore and Witchcraft in the South," *Journal of American Folklore* 3 (1890): 301–17; Balandier, *Daily Life in Kongo*, 248–50; Laman, *Kongo*, III: 216–21; Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," 834–36; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; Charles A. Raymond, "Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* 27 (June–November, 1963): Part I, 478–80, Part II, 676, Part III, 821; David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Thorpe Series, James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

113
567
771

27. Despite the exalted modern application of the term "ontology" in its reference to abstract being, "ontology" originally referred to that which belongs to existent finite being. See Walter Brugger, ed., *Philosophical Dictionary*, trans. Kenneth Baker (Spokane: Gonzaga University Press, 1972), 301–2 ("Ontology"). With regard to African culture and spirituality, the concept of being cannot be restricted to the physiological, as opposed to the psychological or fantastic sphere.

771
113
[171)

28. MacGaffey, *Custom in Lower Kongo*, 261–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 173–76, 179, 183–85; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, Chapters 2–6; Placide Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, trans. Colin King (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1959), passim; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–88; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 52; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 115–17; Mbiti *African Religions*, 2–16.

171
113

29. Michael Welton, "Themes in African Traditional Belief and Ritual," *Practical Anthropology* 18 (1971): 1–8; E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion, A Definition* (London: SMC Press, 1973), 61–68; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, July 28, 1843, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 592.

[771)

30. Mbiti *African Religions*, 210–13; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 106; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 190–91; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174, 183–84; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–5; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 41, 81–89; Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, Chapters 5–6; Jahn, *Muntu*, 110, 114–17; Amponsah, *Topics on African Traditional Religion*, 70–80; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 152–60.

31. Mbiti, *African Religions*, 16.

32. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 117–21; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 84.

33. Tempels, *Bantu Philosophy*, 64–66; Jahn, *Muntu*, 121–27; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 187–202; Abraham, *Mind of Africa*, 48–49, 52, 59–62; Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 174–93; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 123–24; Mbiti, *African Religions*, 15–16, Chapters 11–14; Parrinder, *Religion in Africa*, 78–83; Thompson and Cornet, *Four Moments of the Sun*, 27–99; Opoku, *West African Religion*, 91–139; Amponsah, *Topics on Traditional Religion*, 48–68.

3. Missionaries and Masters

175
793
113

1. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Faith Vibert, "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts: Its work for the Negroes in North America before 1783," *Journal of Negro History* 25 (April, 1933): 171, 182–84, 188–89; John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: The*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

175 797 113 *Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 25; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (N Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 196–97. There was a tendency am some early missionaries to indiscriminately refer to Indians and Africans as "blacks." S Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 39, n. 20.

2. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 37–38; Samuel Thomas to Dr. Bray, January 20, 1702, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Thomas Nairne to Dr. Marston, August 20, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 2.

175 797 567 3. South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series A, vol. 8; William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Gilbert Jones to SPG, November 16, 1716, SPGLL, BV 6. reel 13, series B vol. 4 (1).

113 4. Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 4; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

5. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 5.

175 797 6. Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11,series A, vol. 19; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; Robert Stevens to SPG, February 21, 1705, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 2, series A, vol. 2.

113 7. Frank Klingberg, ed., *Carolina Chronicle, the Papers of Commissary Gideon Johnston, 1707–1716* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1946), 118–19; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

175 113 8. Thomas Naire to Dr. Marston. August 20, 1705, SPGLL; Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28 SPGLL, BV 6, reel 11, series A, vol. 20; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization* (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 127–30; M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 111–16; Verner W. Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 1670–1732 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964), 168–69, 184–85.

175 9. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 81, 99.

10. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28; Wood. *Black Majority*, 150.

567 797 113 11. Verner W. Crane, "Dr. Thomas Bray and the Charitable Colony Project, 1730," *William and Mary Quarterly* 19, 3d. ser. (January, 1962): 58–61; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 168–69; Henry A. M. Smith, "Purrysburgh," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 10 (October, 1909): 189–91; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 1–18.

12. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 18–19.

13. Smith, "Purrysburgh," 187–95; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 17–18; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 506; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–96; "Letters Showing and Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January 1916): 69–92; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139–42; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, June 20, 1834.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68, 69–70, 72; Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–26.

15. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–74; Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colo-*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

nial Slavery, 72; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 238, 240–42; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–606.

175
567
79
113

16. A. S. Salley, ed., *Minutes of the Vestry of St. Helena's Parish, South Carolina, 1726–1812* (Columbia: State Co., 1919), 22–25; Frederick Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (New York: Arno Press, 1972; repr. from 1820 ed.), 379–81; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 72–74; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 602–3.

17. John Wikhead to SPG, September 26, 1715, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL; South Carolina Clergy to Gideon Johnston, March 4, 1712, SPGLL.

18. Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723 SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Richard Ludlam to SPG, 1725, SPGLL.

19. Samuel Thomas to SPG, December 25, 1702, SPGLL; Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 20, 1712, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vol. 7; Letters of J. Ottolenghe, July 12, 1758, SPG, London Ms. of Dr. Bray's Associates, Letters from the American Colonies, BX 19, reel 10; Klingberg, *Carolina Chronicle*, 118–19.

20. *SCG*, May 4, 1734; Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapter 10; *SCG*, April 16 and 23, 1737; David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) 342.

21. Wood, *Black Majority*, 314–15, 324–25; For a discussion on the relationship between literacy, rebelliousness and Spanish agitation, see Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 69–70; and Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 207–9.

22. Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–104; Garden attempted to interest the Bray Associates in his plans for a Negro school. He proposed that the two Purrysburgh missionaries alter their arrangement, pointing to the larger, more accessible black population in Charleston and better opportunities for success. The two Moravians presented the proposal to Oglethorpe and the Associates, but to no avail. The Purrysburgh missionaries reluctantly kept their commitment to the Associates. Van Horne, *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery*, 19.

17
567
79
113

23. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 66–68; Wood, *Black Majority*, 323–24; Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, SPGLL; Dalcho, *Episcopal Church of South Carolina*, Chapter 4.

24. Sirmans *Colonial South Carolina*, 14–15, 76–77; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 198; George Fox, *A Memoir of the Life, Travels, and Gospel Labours of George Fox* (London: Friends' Book and Track Depository, 1867), 263–65, 270, 279–80; Sidney V. James, *A People Among People: Quaker Benevolence in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), 148–49; William F. Medlin, *Quaker Families in South Carolina and Georgia* (Columbia, S. C.: Ben Franklin Press, 1982), 7–11, 19. As Quakers strengthened their antislavery stand in the colonial era, they were less and less successful in South Carolina. By the time of the War for Independence, the Quakers had left South Carolina. Howard Beeth, "Outside Agitators in Southern History: The Society of Friends, 1650–1800" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Houston, 1984), 101, 424–51.

17
113

25. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 36–37; Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Proprietary Government, 1670–1719* (New York: Macmillan 1897), 334, 325–26; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–13.

175
113

26. F. Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the*

175
113

First Baptist Church of South Carolina, 1683–1883 (Baltimore: R. H. Woodland, 1899), 7, 39, 56–59, 84–86, 94–97; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 1–79, 221–26, 242–52; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848), 700–702; Ahlstrom, *Religious History*, 172–73; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 26–35. There is some controversy over Screven's actual arrival with the largest group of Baptists. The Charleston Baptist Church maintains that the date of its establishment and Screven's arrival is 1683. Baptist historian Joe M. King places it at 1696. Here we use the generally accepted date of 1683. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 13.

27. Samuel Thomas to SPG, January 25, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 1, series A, vol. 1; Francis Le Jau to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

28. Lewis Jones to SPG, January 26, 1727–28, SPGLL; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 74–75; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 25–35.

175
567

29. Francis Le Jau to SPG, February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 7; William G. McLoughlin and Winthrop D. Jordan, eds., "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery in 1710," *Journal of Southern History* 29 (November, 1963): 497–501.

113

30. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptist Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98; New Jersey prescribed death for slaves convicted of murder, arson, mutilation or rape of a white woman, and castration for attempted rape. The Lords of Trade (in London) denounced such "inhumane penalities on Negroes," and the Privy Council voted to disallow the law. See Edgar McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), 84–85; *Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey* 42 vols. (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society), 3:473–74; W. L. Grant and James Munro, eds. *Acts of the Privy Council: Colonial Series, 1613–1783*, 6 vols. (London: Wyman Publishers), 2:848.

31. McLoughlin and Jordan, "Baptists Face the Barbarities of Slavery," 496–98.

32. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 14–17, 26–35.

4. Christianity, Bondage, and the Great Awakening

175
113

1. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 77, 81, 308–9; Edward McCrady, *South Carolina under the Royal Government 1719–1776* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 180, 185–88; Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History 1663–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 207–8; David T. Morgan, "The Great Awakening in South Carolina, 1740–1775," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (Fall, 1971): 595–96.

2. William Seward, *Journal of a Voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia and from Philadelphia to England* (London: James Buckland, 1740), 5; Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), I: 418–19, II: 60, 139–43; John Pollack, *George Whitefield and the Great Awakening* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 3–10, 47–54, 62–68; *George Whitefield's Journals* (Guildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1960; repr. unabridg. from 1905 ed., with unpubl. Journal, first publ. 1938), 82–93, 156–59, 302–11, 571–88; Sir James Stephens, *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, 5th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1837), 382–83, 389–90.

3. Whitefield, *Journals*, 165.

4. Ibid., 302–5; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 45–50, 63–71.

175•
113

5. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 413–42; Whitefield, *Journals*, 338–62 and passim.

6. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 442–43; Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

7. Whitefield, *Journals*, 384–85.

8. Ibid., 386–89.

9. Ibid., 400–401.

10. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 482–83; Frank J. Klingberg, *An Appraisal of the Negro in Colonial South Carolina: A Study in Americanization*, (Washington, D. C.: Associated Publishers, 1941), 71–73; Seward, *Journal*, 5; Whitefield, *Journals*, 401, 439–49; Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 596–602. Whitefield was preaching to up to 4,000 listeners in Charleston in 1740 on his summer tour. He finally grew tired of listening to Garden bewail against him and no longer attended St. Philip's when he was in the city. Instead he "went to the Baptist and Independent meeting-houses, where Jesus Christ was preached." Whitefield, *Journals*, 449–50.

11. McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 246–47; Rev. Alexander Garden to Rev. Samuel Smith, September 24, 1742, in John C. Van Horne, ed., *Religious Philanthropy and Colonial Slavery: the Correspondence of the Associates of Dr. Bray, 1717–1777* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 93–94, 338; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 101–17.

12. Klingberg *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–14, 119–22; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 245–46, 439–40.

13. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 121, n. 56; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 247.

14. Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 119–21; Clarke's population estimate was very close to the mark. Philip D. Morgan's recent article places the Lowcountry population at 53,257 in 1760. See his "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1983), 85, Table 1.

15. Seward, *Journal*, 6, 7, 11; Whitefield, *Journals*, 379; Stephen J. Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery: Some New Evidence," *Church History* 42, no. 2 (June, 1973): 243, 248.

16. Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 124–26; Dallimore, *Whitefield Great Evangelist*, I: 482–84, 495–501; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Alexander Garden, *Six letters to the Rev. George Whitefield*, 2nd ed. (Boston: T. Fleet, 1740), passim; Stein "George Whitefield on Slavery." 244.

17. Whitefield, *Journals*, 406–7; Seward, *Journal*, 10; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 495; *Three Letters from the Reverend Mr. G. Whitefield* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1740), 13. Whitefield's "Letter . . . Concerning . . . Negroes" was written in Savannah in January 1740, *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

18. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 13–14.

19. Ibid., 14–16.

20. Ibid.

21. Thomas Hassell to SPG, August 30, 1712, SPGLL: Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and February 20, 1711, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 3, series A, vols. 4–7.

22. John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 13, series A, vols. 24–25.

23. Francis Le Jau to SPG, June 13, 1710, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5; John Fulton to SPG, December 4, 1730, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 23; Francis Le Jau to SPG, March 22, 1708–9, and July 18, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 6.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

•175
113

24. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 130–31; Garden, *Six Letters to Whitefield*, 50–53; *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 16.

25. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 497, 509; Pollack, *Whitefield and Great Awakening*, 221–25; Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730–1775* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 66–67; Stein "Whitefield on Slavery," 245; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 391; Stuart C. Henry, *George Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), 116–17; James Habersham to Countess Dowager of Huntington, December 31, 1770, *Letters of James Habersham 1756–1775*, Collections, Georgia Historical Society, vol. 6, 109–11.

26. Quoted from Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 117.

27. Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 5–6; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446–50; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 219; *Hugh Bryan and Mary Hutson, Living Christianity, Delineated in the Diaries and Letters of two Pious Persons lately Deceased; Mr. Hugh Bryan and Mrs. Mary Hutson, both of South Carolina* (London: J. Buckland, 1750), 13, 70, 91, passim; William Maine Hutson, "The Hutson Family of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 9 (July, 1908): 127; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan, 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 31–45; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 19.

28. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 1–4, 13; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 7–9, 32; Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 440, 502–4; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in Colonial South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3d ser., no. 4 (October, 1986): 596–98; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 70; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 238–43; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 71; Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 248–51.

29. Whitefield, *Journals*, 446, 450; Hutson, "Hutson Family," 127; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1741–42*, 404, 406–8, and *1742–44*, 72; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 241–43; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 594, 605–9; David S. Lovejoy, " 'Desperate Enthusiasm': Early Signs of American Radicalism," in Margaret Jacob and James Jacob, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984), 237, 241, n. 24.

30. Whitefield, *Journals*, 502–4; Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 586; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 600–3.

31. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 605–10; Lovejoy " 'Desperate Enthusiasm,' " 237; McCrady, *South Carolina under Royal Government*, 240–42; Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 231–32; *Journal of the Assembly, 1741–42*, 406–8, 461–62.

32. *Journal of the Assembly, 1742–44*, 72–73, 364–368, 394, 398; Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 55–126; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 604, 609, 613–14.

33. Morgan, "Great Awakening in South Carolina," 599–601; Mrs. R. W. Hutson, "Register kept by the Rev. William Hutson of Stoney Creek Independent Congregational Church and (Circular) Congregational Church in Charles Town, S. C., 1743–1760," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 38 (January, 1937): 21–33; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 70–71; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," 606, 612–13.

34. Whitefield, *Journals*, 501; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 66, 92, 209, n. 12; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 11–20, 29–30, 32–33.

35. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 84–87, 111, 114–15, 159–66; Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal of Negro History* 7 (April, 1922): 172–77; "Letters Showing the Rise and Progress of the Early Negro Churches of Georgia and the West Indies," *Journal of Negro History* 1 (January, 1916): 73, 77–78.

175
113

36. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 164–65, 195; "Early Negro Churches," 77–78, 83–86; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 177, 182–84; William Aldridge, ed., *A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, A Black*, 4th ed. (London: Gilbert and Plummer, 1785).

37. Thomas Hassell to SPG, December 2, 1731 and March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series A, vol. 4 (2); Francis Varnod to SPG, January 13, 1723, SPGLL BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4 (2); Peter H. Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee at Last," *Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Religion Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (November, 1979): 2–5.

38. Quoted from James B. Lawrence, "Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 14 (March, 1930): 46–47.

39. Ibid.

175
197
113

40. Donald R. Kloe, "Buddy Quow: An Anonymous Poem in Gullah-Jamaican Dialect Written Circa 1800," *Southern Folklore Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (June, 1974): 82–85, 87–88. For a discussion which denies, incorrectly I think, that there is a distinction between Gullah and "generalized Black English vernacular," see J. L. Dillard, *Lexicon of Black English* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 103–4. An interesting discussion of Gullah as a Creole language is found in Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), Chapter 7: see also Wood, *Black Majority*, 172–90. For a discussion of cultural unity joining Gullahs with blacks of the Caribbean, see Velma Pollard. "Cultural Connections in Paule Marshall's *Praise Song for the Widow*," *World Literature Written in English* 25, no. 2 (1985): 285–98. For a fascinating, informative debate over the formulation of Creole and the impact of Upper Guinea versus Gold Coast and Angolan influences see Frederick G. Cassidy, "The Place of Gullah," 3–16, and Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships," *American Speech* 55, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 17–35.

175
113

41. See Chapter 2. Also see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1971). Thomas discusses systems of beliefs current in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, and retention of some beliefs after that time. As Thomas states, almost every "primitive" religion was for the adherents a means of gaining supernatural power. Yet this does not preclude religion as a means of explanation, decreeing of moral imperatives, or representation of social order.

42. Benjamin Pownall to SPG, October 24, 1723, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 7, series B, vol. 4(2); Alexander Garden to SPG, May 6, 1740, Box 20 from Lambeth Palace Library, vol. 941, no. 72, Ms. of Archbishop of Canterbury; J. Ottolenghe to SPG, July 12, 1758, November 18, 1754, SPG London Mss of Dr. Bray's Associates.

43. Robert Maule to SPG, Summer, 1710, and, Francis Le Jau to SPG, October 20, 1709, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 4, series A, vol. 5.

44. Ibid.; Thomas Hassell to SPG, March 12, 1712, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 5, series A, vol. 7.

45. Whitefield, *Journals*, 382–83, Stein, "Whitefield on Slavery," 246–47.

46. *Three Letters from Whitefield*, 14; Francis Varnod to SPG, April 3, 1728, SPGLL, BV 6, reel 12, series A, vol. 21; John Fulton to SPG, May 25, 1734, SPGLL William Taylor to SPG, May 15, 1716, SPGLL, BV 7, reel 6, series B, vol. 4 (1).

47. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 56, 57, 63, 72, 90, passim; Hutson, "Register of Stoney Creek Church," 22–26; Jackson, "Hugh Bryan," passim.

48. Bryan and Hutson, *Living Christianity*, 70–91.

49. Ibid., 63; *Journal of the Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505.

50. Whitefield, *Journals*, 419, 422, 444, 446; Seward, *Journal*, 6–7; Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

•175
112

51. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 6–9; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 1–2.

52. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.

53. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 10–11; Wood, "Jesus Christ Has Got Thee," 2.

54. Aldridge, *Marrant Narrative*, 13.

55. Ibid., 14, 36–37.

56. Ibid., 15–28, 31–33, 36–39.

57. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 45–56, 364, n. 3; Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 27, 61.

58. Henry, *Whitefield, Wayfaring Witness*, 96–98; Stephens, *Ecclesiastical Biography*, 400.

59. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 484, 498–501 and II: 436–38; Anon., probably George Whitefield, *A Letter to the Negroes Lately Converted to Christ in America* (London: J. Hart, 1743), 3–6; Stein, "George Whitefield on Slavery," 243–56.

60. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, II: 438; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 5–6; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 162.

61. Dallimore, *Whitefield, Great Evangelist*, I: 499–509; Klingberg, *Appraisal of the Negro*, 113–22; Joseph Ottolenghe to SPG, December 4, 1751 and July 12, 1758, SPG, London Mss. of Dr. Bray's Associates; Habersham to William Knox, July 17, 1765 and November 26, 1770, *Habersham Letters*, 38, 95–99, 102, Wood, *Black Majority*, 324–25; W. Robert Higgins, "The Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves in Colonial South Carolina," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 (1971): 40; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–86.

62. Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, 160–65; Darold D. Wax, "Georgia and the Negro Before the American Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (March, 1967): 73–75.

5. An Almost Chosen People

175
669
112

1. Lionel Kennedy and Thomas Parker, *The Trial Record of Denmark Vesey*, Intro. by John Oliver Killens (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970; repr. from 1822 ed., and published under title: *An Official Report of the Trials of Sundry Negroes*), Bibliographic Note; Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly* 12 (September, 1863): 295; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 11–12.

175
669
567
112

2. Robert Starobin, ed., *Denmark Vesey: The Slave Conspiracy of 1822* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), 11; John Lofton, *Denmark Vesey's Revolt* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 132–37; updated ed. of *Insurrection in South Carolina: The Turbulent World of Denmark Vesey* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1964); Harriott Pinckney Rutledge to Edward Rutledge, August 5, 1822, Pinckney Papers, 1744–1849, SCHS; William Jones to Samuel Jones, Jane Bruce Jones Mss, 1784–1831, SCL; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 130–31; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 4–14, 18, 21–22, 57–59, 111; Marina Wikramanayake, *A World in Shadow: The Free Black in Antebellum South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 133–36.

3. Philip D. Morgan, "Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture," *Slavery and Abolition* 6 no. 3 (1985): 57–58; Joseph Cephas Carroll, *Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800–1865* (Boston: Chapman and Grimes, 1938), 17, 19–24; Peter H. Wood. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), 285–307, 314–35; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 31–36; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 157. Although Morgan offers no explanation for the discrep-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 ancy between the number of runaways in Virginia and South Carolina, he notes the pres-
567 ence of more African-born slaves among the captive runaway population in South Carolina.
Thus the numbers of Africans in Carolina's slave population clearly accounts for some of
112 the difference between the two colonies.

[669] 4. *SCG*, September 8 to September 15, 1759, October 23, 1751, November 25, 1751, May 28 to June 4, 1754, June 16, 1758.

175 5. Ibid., September 14 to September 21, 1747, June 25 to July 2, 1750; Eugene D.
Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern*
567 *World* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 69; Jill M. Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Our-
selves Only': Seminole Black Perceptions and the Second Seminole War," *UCLA Historical*
113 *Journal* 7 (1986): 5–7; Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: International Publishers, 1967; repr. from 1943 ed.), 197–98; Philip D. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810," in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 92, 118.

6. *SCG*, March 4, 1756, April 29, 1754; Colonial Records of South Carolina, *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly, 1739–1741*, 230, 505; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live For Ourselves Only'," 6–7.

7. Michael P. Johnson, "Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799–1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July, 1981): 3, 418, 433–36, 441. Although Professor Johnson is dealing with a later period, his research is applicable for the eighteenth century; *SCG*, March 17, 1724, April 21, 1759.

8. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. This view of slavery in the Lowcountry, in terms of its
175 harshaness, is different from that of Philip Morgan. He cites, for example, the transition
113 from a period of negative to one of positive increase, as an important indicator of less harsh conditions and more black autonomy. Yet Morgan's table on natural increase shows an annual rate of only 1.9 percent as the highest, from 1770–75. This rate of increase appears far too negligible to tell us much about better contitions. Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 83–89.

9. *SCG*, September 17, 1772. For other manifestations of black assertion in urban Charleston see Peter H. Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business' in Revolutionary South Carolina: Republicanism and the Slave Society," in Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 268–93.

10. James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4–34. For paternalistic arguments, see Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan Roll, the World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), xiv–xvii, 3–149, 280–84; also for a more measured discussion of paternalism, see Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 56, 231–32.

11. Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973; first pub. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1961), Preface; Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life" in Alfred F. Young, ed. *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 351–52; J. Madison, Jr. to William Bradford, November 26, 1774 and July 10, 1775, William Bradford Collection, HSP; Wood, " 'Taking Care of Business'," 283–87; and his " 'Impatient of Oppression'; Black Freedom Struggles on the Eve of White Independence," *Southern Exposure* 28 (October, 1985): 606, 612–13.

17 12. Walter Brooks, "The Priority of the Silver Bluff Church and its Promoters," *Journal*
113

17 113 30; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 9–10, 18–19; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 24–29, 50–54, Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117–18, 121–22; John Phillips, *An Appeal to Matters of Fact and Common Sense, Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Inhabitants of Charleston, South Carolina* (New York: T. Kirk, 1798), passim; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry." Although Morgan does not see much black participation during the War for Independence (a point on which we disagree), he does note the postwar impact on the Lowcountry in terms of an increased sense of autonomy among blacks which was manifested in a number of ways. See especially 108–41.

•175 567 113 19. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 47–51; J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957 repr. from 1782 ed.), 155–161; Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–221; Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 29; Avonor Samuel to William Tilghman, December 30, 1785, William Tilghman Papers, HSP; Benjamin Rush Medical Notes, July 12, 1803, Rush Corr. v. 2: 64, HSP.

20. Major Pierce Butler to Mrs. Izard, February 25, 1797, Butler to John Hoom, January 6, 1803, Butler to John Cooper, February 15, 1818 and March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 7, HSP; Roswell King to Pierce Butler, September 20, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Pierce Butler to Mr. Taylor, March 28, 1840, Letterbook, 1838–1840, 53–55, and notation of sale of Butler slaves, February 21, 1859, box 41, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Frances Ann Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, ed. John A. Scott (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 94, 176, 203, 128, 265–66, 273–74.

175 113 21. Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 207–08; Watts, " 'We Do Not Live for Ourselves Only'," 6–8; Letter of John De Brahn, August 28, 1787, Cox-Parrish Wharton Coll., vol. 4, HSP; Pierce Butler letter, July 4, 1789, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 31, fol. 1, HSP; Major Pierce Butler to R. Izard, September 8, 1789, SCL; the full account of the expeditions in Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 139.

[567] [669] 22. Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion; Slave Revolts in Eighteenth Century Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 140–161; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 217–18, 241; Samuel G. Stoney, ed., "The Autobiography of William John Grayson" *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 29–30; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow 1986), 118; Carroll, *Slave Insurrections*, 66–67; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63.

23. Although white Loyalists were never really compensated for their losses in bondspeople during the War for Independence, Americans fared better after the War of 1812. The dispute over losses in slave property raged on after the Treaty of Ghent in 1814. But in 1822, with the Czar of Russia as arbitrator, the dispute was decided in favor of the United States. Britain agreed to pay $1,204,960 for 3,601 slaves, only half of the value claimed by American slave owners. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 56–57; Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 171–72; Harding, *There Is a River*, 62–63; Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 91; November 17, 1862, John Forsyth Mss., SCL.

24. Letter of Rachel Blanding, July 4, 1816, William Blanding Mss., SCL.

25. Ibid.; Trial of Negroes for Insurrection, July 3–17, 1816, Kershaw County Manscripts, SCL.

26. Quoted in Aptheker, *Slave Revolts*, 258–59; Trial of Negroes, SCL; Blanding Letter, July 25, 1816, SCL.

27. Letter of Rachel Blanding, December 2, 1808, July 25, 1813, SCL.

28. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 118.

3; Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

•175
113

29. Ibid., 113–30.

30. "Historical Sketch of the Euhaw Baptist Church," submitted for private reading by church officers, 1928, Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., SCL; David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848; repr. from 1813 ed.) 701–3; James W. Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society Paper, n.d., 4–5, Beaufort Township Library; John Archibald Armstrong, "Beaufort and the Sea Islands, Their History and Traditions," compiled from newspaper articles in the *Beaufort Republican*, 1867–1873, Beaufort Township Library; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964), 10–17, 26–38; quoted from James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller*, (New York: Scheldon Co., 1789), 12–13.

17
797
113

31. Lawton Family Papers, SCL: Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL: Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–99; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 6; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 92–96, 146–47; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 13, 15, 78–79.

175
113

32. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 172–82; "Early Negro Churches," 70–71; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 12–13; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 139. In the Peedee region, the Welsh Neck Church, formed in 1738, was a large congregation whose extensive black membership was organized into a separate church in 1779. This was a short-lived experiment, ending in 1782. At that time, some whites and a "greater number of blacks" were excommunicated by a new minister who discovered that upon examination, the blacks especially."appeared to be very ignorant of the nature of true religion." King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 39–44.

33. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 174–76, 178, 182, 191; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 29–31.

34. Mrs. J. H. Redding, *Life and Times of Jonathan Bryan 1708–1788* (Savannah: Morning News Print, 1901), 43; "Early Negro Churches," 77–79; Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 186–87; John Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register for 1798–1801* (London: Dilly, Button, Thomas, 1802), 366–67; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*. Andrew's church spawned two sister churches in Savannah by the early nineteenth century.

35. Brooks, "Silver Bluff Church," 181–190; "Early Negro Churches," 83–87; Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 11.

36. Wilson, *Loyal Blacks*, 10–12, 29–31; Walker, *Black Loyalists*, 4–5; Kathleen Tudor, "David George: Black Loyalist," *Nova Scotia Historical Society* 3, no. 1 (1983): 71–75.

37. Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 9–14; Redding, *Jonathan Bryan*, 44–45.

(797)

38. Quarles, *Negro in the American Revolution*, 135–40, 44–45; Matthew Tate to Benjamin Rush, October 1, 1792, Benjamin Rush Correspondence, vol. 7: 6, HSP.

175
527
113

39. Diary of John Bartram, 78–79, John Bartram Papers, HSP.

40. U.S. Census Office, *First Census, 1790* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791), 54; "Diary of Timothy Ford," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 45 (1944): 142–45.

41. Abigail Capers to Eliza Russell, March 25, 1971; James McBride Dabbs Papers, SHC.

(794)

42. John Bartram Diary, July 1, 1765–April 10, 1766, John Bartram Papers, HSP; Johnson, *Social History*, 18–26, 115–118; Armstrong, "Sea Islands History," 30; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

•175

113 43. Richard Furman to Roger Williams, September 10, 1800, Richard Furman Papers, SCL.

(567) 44. Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, February 9 and March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL.

(797) 45. Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 57, 60–61; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 15; Rules and Regulations of the Coloured Ministers, Elders and Members of Baptist Church in Charleston, SCL; Edmund Botsford to Richard Furman, March 10, October 12, 1796, October 15, 1808, Edmund Botsford Letters, BC.

46. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century Revival*, 2 vols. (Gildford and London: Billing and Sons, 1970), II: 438; Rev. A. M. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas* (Nashville: Barbee and Smith, 1897), 32–34; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 3–6; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 59–60, 75; Albert Deems Betts, *History of South Carolina Methodism* (Columbia: Advocate Press, 1952), 192; F. A. Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* (Nashville: E. Stevenson and J. E. Evans, 1856), 23–24, 40, 48, 71, 128.

47. *Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 3 vols. (New York: N. Bangs and T. Mason, 1821), I: 381–82; Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 39–43; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 7–9.

48. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 22–23; Mood, *Methodism in Charleston* 71, 128; Asbury, *Journals*, II: 28–29.

49. Asbury, *Journals*, II: 241.

50. Norwood, *American Methodism*, 88–93; Albert M. Shipp, *History of Methodism in South Carolina* (Nashville: Southern Methodist Publishing House, 1884), 467–71; "Christmas Agreement," January 2, 1795, HSSCC; James Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings of Reverend J. Jenkins of the South Carolina Conference*, printed for the author in 1842, copy found at HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 10–21; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 38–43.

17 51. William Hammett Journal, entries for August 26, 1794, January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, and February 15, 1795, Wm. Hammett Ms., SCL.

113 52. Ibid., January 15, 1795.

53. Smith, *In His Image, But*, 129–35.

175 54. Hammett Journal, entries for January 15, 1795, February 8, 1795, February 15, 1795, SCL; Phillips, *Appeal of Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10–11, 15, 17, 21–22, 29.

113 55. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 78, 126; James O. Andrew, "On Methodism in Charleston," *MMQR* 12 (1830): 20–28; A. M. Travis, *Autobiography of the Reverend Joseph M. Travis*, (Nashville E. Stevenson and F. A. Owens), 1855, 86–87; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 21–26.

56. William M. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 136–37; Andrew, "Methodism in Charleston," 18–20; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 167; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 55–57.

57. Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 223–24; Carol George, *Segregated Sabbaths, Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–18, 29–32; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 22–23, 128.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175
113

58. Article written by Sancho, a former slave, in the Papers of Hugh A. C. Walker, HSSCC.

59. Phillips, *Appeal to Inhabitants of Charleston*, 10, 22–23; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 122; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 79, 91; Wightman Ledger and Notebook, 1801, Papers of William May Wightman, HSSCC; Asbury, *Journals*, III: 9, 14; Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings*, 102–3, 105–6.

60. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 22–26; Shipp, *Methodism in South Carolina*, 467.

61. Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism*, 156; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 61–62; Jenkins, *Experience, Labours and Sufferings*, 96–97; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 117; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, passim; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64.

62. George, *Segregated Sabbaths*, 69–86; Betts, *South Carolina Methodism*, 80; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 14–15; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–93; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 120–124; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 70–72.

63. Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 124–26; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 92–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 2–3.

64. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 93, 145; Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement," 71, 75; Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 74, 87–88, 125.

65. The most thorough study is Lofton, *Denmark Vesey*; Also see Wikramanayake, *World in Shadow*, 113–153; Richard Wade, "The Vesey Plot: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Social History* (May, 1964); Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Black Rebellion* (New York: Arno Press, 1969; repr. from 1889 ed.), 215–75; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 49–86; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*; Richard Wade has maintained that the conspiracy never really existed. Wade is refuted by Sterling Stuckey in "Remembering Denmark Vesey," *Negro Digest* (February, 1966); and to a lesser extent by Freehling, in *Prelude to Civil War*, 53–61. Yet John Oliver Killens has made objections to Freehling's and Wade's presentations of the conspiracy, describing their interpretations as distorted. Freehling adopts the language of the slaveholders. He portrays Denmark Vesey as "a powerful unscrupulous man who was given to fits of rage and violence," and as a man who employed a "skillful fusion of the high ideals of the Age of Reason with the ruthless savagery of a barbaric chief." Bibliographic note in Kennedy and Parker. (*Trial*, xiv.) Freehling's characterization of Gullah Jack is also taken from the slaveholder's presentation. The author wrote:

> Possessed of tiny limbs, which looked *grotesque* despite his small frame, Gullah Jack had enormous whiskers, which seemed monstrous on the *hulking* Denmark Vesey. No witch doctor ever looked more the part . . . a scorcerer whose bizarre appearance, wild gestures and malevolent glances could terrorize the bravest slave. (55–56).

66. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 45, 58, 63–65, 114–15; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 21, 62, 25. The late Professor Starobin's excellent edition of primary sources related to the Vesey Conspiracy was most useful. Testimony not in the official record but part of manuscript collections, contemporary reactions to the plot, and private letters are contained in his volume. Starobin's edition adds to the body of literature on this little-studied rebellion effort and reveals that some sources related to it have yet to be fully utilized. [127]

67. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 142; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 25, 50, 61, 64; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 46, 58–59.

68. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 66; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64; Gayraud S. Gilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People*, 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1983), 57–58.

69. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 61, 64.

70. Ibid., 43.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

175

113

71. C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins, Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2nd ed. rev. (New York: Vintage, 1963), 83–89, and passim.

72. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 13–14, 76–79, 89; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 26, 32, 41–42, 45, 46.

73. Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit: African and Afro-American Art and Philosophy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 117, 121; Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against European Colonial Order* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), passim.

74. See Chapter 2; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 45; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 76–77, 163, 17, 37–38, 81, 85–86, 95–102, 105–6, 125.

75. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 50, 88, 90, 95, 130; John M. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 144; James, *Black Jacobins*, 86–87.

76. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39; Killens, *Trial*, 75, 89, 86, 109, 117, 122–23, 125, 134–35, 164–65.

77. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 79, 81–82, 95–96, 140–41; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 52.

78. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 39, 42, 63–64, Killens, *Trial*, 28–38, 42, 74–75, 77, 79, 86, 112–13, 125.

79. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.

80. Ibid., 38–40, 79.

81. Ibid., 137.

82. Ibid., 94–95, 131; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 38, 40.

83. Among them are Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*. Here Wade argues that the urban environment was "inhospitable to conspiracies because it provided a wider latitude to the slave, a measure of independence within bondage. . . ." According to Wade, this environment served to deflate the insurrectionary impulse, 241–42. Also see Gerald Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*. Vesey did not make the mistake which Mullin claimed was made by Gabriel, that is, not providing an appealing ideology to country slaves and the African-born. We will never know if indeed Gabriel did make this mistake since the record reveals no spiritual presence in the 1800 revolt. This does not however preclude the existence of a spiritual force undetected by the court.

84. Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 38–53, 96–99; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 64–65, 83.

85. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 26.

86. Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 19, 23–25, 39, 47, 65; Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 19–22, 50–54, 56, 62, 78, 80–81, 86, 92, 97, 100–5, 109–10, 119, 130–31.

87. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 18, 20–21, 26–27, 62, 78–79, 85; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, passim, Beaufort Township Library; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter, The Story of Robert Smalls* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1958), 24; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 36–37; Rosengarten, *Tombee*.

88. William Jones to Samuel Jones, July 23, 1822, Jane Bruce Jones Mss., 1784–1834, SCL; Jacob Rapelye to Paul Rapelye, August 5, 1822, Napier, Rapeley and Bennett Papers, SCL; E. M. Starrs to Zalmon Wildman, July 19, 1822, Zalmon Wildman Papers, 1812–1840, SCL; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 184; James Hamilton, *Negro Plot* (Charleston: Joseph W. Ingraham, 1822), 29.

89. Benjamin Elliott, "To Our Northern Brethren," as quoted by Edwin C. Holland in *A Refutation of the Calumnies Circulated against the Southern and Western States, Respecting the Institutions and Existence of Slavery Among Them* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1822), 79.

90. *Ibid.*, 11–12.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

•175
113

91. Kennedy and Parker, *Trial*, 31–32.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Ibid., 132–33; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 173–75, 182–84.

94. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL.

95. Richard Furman, *Exposition on the Views of the Baptists*, 15.

96. Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–17; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 60–61, 72–73; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 27, 33–49; Harding, *There Is a River*, 81–94; Starobin, *Denmark Vesey*, 82, 163–64; Aptheker, *Negro Revolts*, 273, 279; Lofton, *Vesey's Revolt*, 182–85.

97. Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 11–13; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 64. Cornelius maintains that international events such as Latin American independence movements and West Indian slave revolts were among the factors which hindered religious instruction.

6. *"Religion of the Warm Heart": Plantations Missions and Methodist Impact*

1. Anon., "Letter to the Editor," *Christian Advocate* 4 (January, 1826): 96; Not to be confused with the *Southern Christian Advocate*, a Methodist newspaper.

2. Ibid., 4 (June, 1826): 258–59.

3. See Chapter 5 for references to "Philemon"; *Wesleyan Journal*, July 1, 1826 and July 22, 1826, HSSCC.

4. Luther Porter Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes, 1830–1860," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (1930): 83–84; Donald Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism: A Chapter in American Morality, 1780–1845* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 68–69, 71–72; William W. Wightman, *Life of William Capers, Including an Autobiography* (Nashville: J. B. McFerrin, 1858), 291–92; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 46–47; Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977), 15, 40–42; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina at Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim and 1–8, 10.

5. Pinckney, *Address*, 11–12.

6. Ibid., 13.

7. Ibid., passim; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 101–53; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 73, 78; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831) 315–17.

8. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 70–71; Susan Markey Fickling, "Slave Conversion in South Carolina, 1830–1860," (M. A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 1924), 16, Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 81–83; Andrew, "Slave Population," 291–92, 315–17; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 161–66.

9. Andrew, "Slave Population," 316–19; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68–71.

10. L.J.C. Lambert to Methodist Conference, South Carolina, January 10, 1829, HSSCC; "Statistical Report," *MMQR* (1828): 40; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288, 292–293; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 68; Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 45–47. Much of the work of religious instruction in coastal Georgia was done by a Presbyterian, Charles Col-

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

cock Jones. But Jones began about ten years after Capers. See Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion," 39–45 and Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155–57. 175 113

11. Andrew, "Slave Population," 314–15.

12. Ibid., 316–19, 322.

13. David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 356–61, 365–66, 452–53, 460–62; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963), 350–62. For a different, more sympathetic view of the Methodists, see Sidney G. Diamond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), passim, especially 18–41, 87–103, 254–73.

14. Andrew, "Slave Population," 321.

15. Letter about the life of George W. Moore, missionary to the slaves in South Carolina, written at the time of his death in 1863 (name of writer of the letter is illegible), HSSCC; Leroy F. Beaty, *Work of South Carolina Methodism among the Slaves: An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Conference*, November 26, 1901, HSSCC, 9–10; *CAJ*, March 16, 1932. Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291–92; Pinckney, *Address*, 23, (Appendix); Andrew, "Slave Population," 314; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 66–69. Both Jackson and Fickling take the position that the South Carolina Conference made the first moves toward religious instruction. They probably got this impression from Jones, *Religious Instruction*. In Georgia, two associations were formed by planters for religious instruction in 1830–31. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 155.

16. *CAJ*, April 12, 1833, January 22, 1836; "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, January 9, 1839, 14–18, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 288–91, 295–96; Andrew, "Slave Population," 315–16; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 72–73.

17. Courtlandt Van Renssalaer letter, n.d. (between 1835 and 1836), SHC; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 90–91; Frederick A. Norwood, *The Story of American Methodism: A History of the United Methodists and Their Relations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1974), 93–96; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, *CAJ*, November 20, 1835, January 22, 1836; Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 86; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96.

18. Van Renssalaer letter, SHC.

19. "Report of the Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 20, HSSCC; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 295–96; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

20. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 78–79; *SCA*, January 26, 1838.

21. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 74–80; Fickling, "Slave Conversion," 16–18; Jackson, "Religious Instruction of Negroes," 86–87. For an excellent treatment on this surge of activity, see Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4.

22. *CAJ*, May 3, 1833, October 22, 1833. 175

23. Pinckney to Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; Virginia C. Holmgren, *Hilton Head: A Sea Island Chronicle* (Hilton Head, S. C.: Hilton Head Publishing, 1959) 61–67; James Kirk to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 12, 1833, HSSCC. 797 113

24. Holmgren, *Hilton Head*, 130–31; William Pope, Sr. to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

25. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834: James Sealy to William E. Baynard, Esq., January 8, 1834, HSSCC.

26. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834. 175

27. George W. Harley, "Notes on the Poro in Liberia," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of* 797 112

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 797 112 *American Archaeology and Ethnology*, Harvard University 19 (1941): 3, 7; Wilfred D. Hambley, “Initiation of Boys in Angola,” *American Anthrologist*, 37, ser. 2, (1935): 36–40.

28. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834.

29. Ibid. and June 20, 1934.

175 112 30. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–90. The First African Church's association with white ministers and with the regional Baptist Association was anything but smooth. Because many members were slaves, the African Church was subjected to jurisdictions contrary to Baptist policy. In January 1833, Marshall was barred from preaching in his own pulpit, and the Church expelled from Georgia's Sunbury Association. This struggle and turmoil lasted for five years. The Church managed to keep its status, but lost many members before returning to the good graces of white Baptists. See, Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 189–94.

31. *CAJ*, October 4, 1833.

32. Ibid.

175 797 112 33. John Coburn to the Missionary Society, January 11, 1835, HSSCC; “Report of the Missionary Society,” *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, February 10, 1836, 16, HSSCC.

34. John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 14, 1834, January 31, 1834, June 26, 1835, July 22, 1836. Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, July 29, 1836; Pierce Butler to James Smith; March 19, 1839, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, box 38 Letterbook 1838–1840, HSP; *SCA*, June 26, November 13, 1840.

35. “Report of the Missionary Society,” *Minutes of South Carolina Conferencr*, January 9, 1839, 18 and December 25, 1844, 19, HSSCC.

36. “Pastoral Address,” *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14, HSSCC; *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 71–72; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 35; *SCA*, February 23, 1844; “Report of the Missionary Society,” *Minutes of South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, January 13, 1847, 11, and February 10, 1855, 18, HSSCC; *SCA*, May 25, 1855; *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 13, 1860, HSSCC; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 188.

175 567 112 37. Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), passim, but see especially 3–7, 91–93, 119–20, 135–36, 89–91, 597–98, 658–59; Records of Coffin Point Plantation, St. Helena Island, 1800–1821, SCHS; John Stapleton Papers, St. Helena, 1790–1839, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, Beaufort Township Library; Kemble, *Journal*, 42–45, 75; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of A Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986) 30, 55; Diary of Laura M. Towne, Penn School Papers, SHC; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 74–77, 104, 108–12; Major Pierce Butler to John Cooper, March 7, 1818, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

38. Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 134–35; R. King, Jr. “On Management of the Butler Estate and Cultivation of Sugar Cane,” *Southern Agriculturalist* (December, 1828): 597; Kemble, *Journal*, 42. For a different version, one which views the power of the driver as representing an enlargement of black autonomy for Lowcountry slaves in general, see Philip D. Morgan, “Black Society in the Lowcountry, 1760–1810,” in Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

175•

American Revolution (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 118–20. See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 371–74, 386–88. 567

39. Towne Diary, 10; Edward Philbrick to Dr. L. B. Russell, June 15, 1863, Edward Atkinson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 210–211; *SCA*, August 11, 1843. 112

40. Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1769 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974); Johann Schöepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783–84*, trans. Alfred Morrison (Philadelphia: W. J. Campbell, 1911), 220–21. 175 113

41. Lucius Gaston Moffatt and Joseph Médard Carrière, "A Frenchm[illegible] Visits Charleston, 1817," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 2 (April, 1948): 141; Johnson, *Social History*, 22–29; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; R. F. W. Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," *Debow's Review*, XVI (January–June, 1854): 596–98; William Elliot, "On Cultivation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* I (April, 1828): 154; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 70, 72; Crum, *Gullah*, 233–34, U. B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966, repr. from 1918 ed.), 153–54, 223–25. Philip Morgan takes a different view. He argues that Sea Island cotton cultivation resulted in less arduous slave labor and that the task system augmented black independence and autonomy. See his "Ownership of Property by Slaves in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Low Country," *Journal of Southern History*, no. 3 (August, 1983): 399–405, and "Black Society in the Low Country," 106–7, 120–21. 175 567 248 461 113

42. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 19–20; Allston, "Sea Coast Crops of the South," 596–98; Fripp Diary, passim; J. A. Turner, ed., *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: Negro Universities Press, repr. from 1867 ed.) 135–36; Elliott, "Sea Island Cotton," 154; Thomas Lagare, "Preparation of Sea Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturalist* II, ser. 2 (December, 1842): 626–27; R. King to P. Butler, October 31, 1824, December 5, 1824, box 33, folder 1, and March 1, 1835, box 33, fol. 5, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, "A Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton," *Proceedings of the Agricultural Convention and State Agricultural Society of South Carolina* (Charleston: Miller & Browne, 1844), 30; Diary of William F. Allen, 82–83 in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 71–73.

43. Fripp Diary, passim; Towne Diary, 10, 20, 24, 32–33; R. King to P. Butler, Oct. 19, 24, and 31, 1824, box 33, fol. 1, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP; Kemble, *Journal* 174–75, 182–83, 189–92, 226–27, 233, 251, 263–64; King, Jr., "Management of Butler Estate," 3–4; Seabrook, "Memoir on Cotton," 30–31; Johnson, *Social History*; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters From Port Royal* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr., 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.), 13, 31, 114; Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*; The Port Royal Experiment (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 126–27. 17 567 113 (248) [461]

44. Allen Diary, 136, 91; Towne Diary, 33.

45. Kemble, *Journal*, 120–21, 182–83, 189–205, 214, 226–27, 233, 263.

46. Ibid., 135–36, 79–80.

47. Coffin Point Records Overseer report for 1818, SCHS; Fripp Diary, passim; Crum, *Gullah*, 244–45; Wightman, *Life of Capers*, 291; Pinckney, *Address*, 23–24 (Appendix); Johnson, *Social History*, 28–29, 106; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638–1870* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969; repr. from 1896 ed.), 180–86; James H. Cuthbert, *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1878), 198; Federal Writers Program, Georgia, *Drums and Shadows* (Westport, Conn.:

3: Creel H-4 -(no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

17
797
533
113
the known campgrounds by name, location, and dates of their existence. Crum, *Gullah*, 151. According to Crum, W. A. Massebeau in *Camp Meetings in South Carolina* (1919) records the names of 50 campgrounds. Of these, only one, Black Swamp, is south of Charleston. Black Swamp was in the Beaufort District and is close to Savannah. The area experienced its religious revival in the 1830s; Capers, *Catechism*, 14–16; *SCA*, June 30, 1843, July 14, 1843, December 29, 1843, January 12, 1849; John McKim to Mrs. Wendell Garrison, April 20, 1864, W. Athorp to Mrs. Wendell P. Garrison, April 20, 1867 Antislavery Papers; Allen Diary, 18–19, 127–28, 164; Nicholas George Julius Ballanta, *St. Helena Spirituals* (New York: G. Schirmer Press, 1925), Introduction and Foreword; Higginson, *Army Life*, 187–88; Crum, *Gullah*, 132–34.

175
113
[533]
[797]

65. *SCA*, December 29, 1843.

66. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837.

67. Higginson, *Army Life*, 71–72.

68. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Archie Epps, "A Negro Separatist Movement in the Nineteenth Century," *The Harvard Law Review* 4, no. 1 (Summer–Fall, 1966): 69–80; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; Fripp Diary, 60.

69. *CAJ*, September 7, 1833, November 7, 1834; *SCA*, September 15, 1843, September 6, 1850; Thompson, *English Working Class*, 367–68.

[797]
70. "Report of Missionary Society," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, January 13, 1847, 11, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840, September 15, 1843, September 29, 1843.

[771]
71. Albert H. Stoddard, "Origin, Dialect, Beliefs and Characteristics of the Negroes of the South Carolina and Georgia Coasts," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September, 1944): 186–95; Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969), Chapters 2, 3, 5, and especially 7; Views on the "spirit" versus the "letter" of Christian doctrine are based on Friedrich Hegel, *Early Theological Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), Chapter 2, ii, "The Moral Teaching of Jesus, (a) The Sermon on the Mount Contrasted with the Mosaic Law and with Kant's Ethics": iv, "The Religious Teaching of Jesus"; E. J. Hobsbawn, *Primitive Rebels*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1963), Intro., especially Chapters 1–3.

72. "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of South Carolina Conference*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; Norwood, *American Methodism*, 208–9; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 40–41; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72.

7. To Make Them Better Slaves: Baptist Persuasion, 1830–1861

17
113
1. *Proceedings of the Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, May 13–15, 1845 on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes* (Charleston: B. Jenkins, 1845), 49; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee, Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 146–47; *CAJ*, June 20, 1834; Harvey H. Jackson, "Hugh Bryan and the Evangelical Movement in South Carolina," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, 3rd. ser., no. 4 (October, 1986); 594–95; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 152–57; A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 4–6, 79; David Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World* (New York: Lewis Colby, 1848 repr. from 1813 ed.), 701–3; Joe Madison King, *A History of South Carolina Baptists* (Columbia: General Board, South Carolina Baptist Convention, 1964) 212–14; H. A. Tupper, ed., *Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church in South Carolina, 1663–1833* (Baltimore: R. H. Wooland, 1899), 224–25; Euhaw Baptist Church Mss., March 14, 1834, Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Ver-

17 113 stille, March 2, 1831, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association*, 1802, October 17, 1817, November 27, 1830, BC.

2. James Busch, "The Beaufort Baptist Church," Beaufort County Historical Society
175 Paper, n.d., 13, Beaufort Township Library, Beaufort, South Carolina; *CAJ*, January 6,
797 1832; William M. Baker, *The Life and Labours of the Reverend Daniel Baker, D. D., Pastor & Evangelist* (Philadelphia: William & Alfred Martien, 1859), 145–56; James H. Cuthbert,
113 *Life of Richard Fuller* (New York: Sheldon Co., 1879), 67–68; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1831, 24, November 26, 1831, 18, 20, November 23, 1833, 10,
[795) BC; see Appendix C.A Table C.1 lists the churches within the Savannah River Baptist Association in 1833, and indicates the number of baptisms for that year.

175 3. *Minutes of the Euhaw Baptist Church, 1831–1875*, December 21, 1831, 41, February 18, 1832, 12, June 23, 1832, 16, August, 1832, 18, SCL; James W. Busch, "Beaufort Church,"
797 15; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82, 104–5; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147. Some Episcopalian planters participating in the 1831 revival subsequently became liberal contributors to the
567 Methodist cause of religious instruction of the slaves. *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, February 10, 1836, 22, January 9, 1839, 18–19, HSSCC;
113 *CAJ*, January 26, 1838. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 20, 1834, BC.

4. Appendix C,A see tables C.1 and C.2. The fluctuation noticeable in the membership of mainland churches occurred because new churches drew members away from older congregations. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November, 1834, taken from the pages of the *Southern Baptist and General Intelligencer*, January 3, 1835, BC.

5. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; Charles C. Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes of the United States* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1842 ed.), 96–98; Chalmers D. Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Plantations in 1860: A Sociological Study* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1975), 96–98.

6. Bynum Shaw, *Divided We Stand: The Baptists in American Life* (Durham: Moore Publishing, 1874), 113–14; Newman, *Baptist Church in the United States*, 304–6; Guion G. Johnson, *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 45, 103–4, 117; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1849, BC. William W. Barnes, *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845–1953* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954), 19; H. Shelton Smith, *In His Image, But . . . Racism in Southern Religion, 1780–1910* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1972), 53–55; Reverend Dr. Richard Furman, *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Colored Population in the United States, in A Communication to the Governor of South Carolina* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1823), 6.

7. Shaw, *Divided We Stand*, 113–16; Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention*, 20–21; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 117–21, 127–28; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 227; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, BC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, November 25, 1837, 5, October 24, 1840, 3, BC.

175 8. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 24, 1838, 6, November 23, 1839,
113 11, October 23, 1841, 12, November 26, 1842, 4–5.

9. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 153, 227; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 16; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 4, BC.

10. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1841, BC.

11. Jones, *Religious Instruction*, 210–11; John B. Adger, D. D., *My Life and Times, 1810–1899* (Richmond, Va.: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1899), 198–99; *Proceedings*

A, [For Appendix C, see Category 795, pp. 337-339--Analyst]

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

175 113 *of Charleston Meeting*, 5–6, 14; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, October 21, 1841, 4, BC.

12. Thomas Bennett to Richard Furman, 1822, Furman Papers, SCL; Charles C. Pinckney, *An Address Delivered in Charleston Before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, At Its Annual Meeting, 18th August, 1829* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1829), passim; James O. Andrew, "The Southern Slave Population," *MMQR* 13 (1831): 315–17; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 14–15.

13. "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Almira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," John H. Tucker to T. D. Grimke, n.d., early in 1845, SCHS; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 71–72; "Pastoral Address," *Minutes of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, December 25, 1844, 14–15, HSSCC; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6, November 24, 1849, 7–8, BC; *SCA*, January 29, 1847; John B. Adger, *A Sermon Preached by the Rev. J. B. Adger of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, S. C.*, May 9, 1847 (Charleston: T. W. Haynes, 1847), 12–13, and *Life and Times*, 164–99; Reverend Alexander Glennie, *Sermons Preached on Plantations to Congregations of Negroes* (Charleston: A. E. Miller, 1844), passim; Charles Colcock Jones, *Suggestions on the Religious Instruction of the Negroes in the Southern States* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847, 27–33; and *A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine and Practice* (Savannah: T. Purse, 1844), passim; Reverend A. F. Dickson, *Plantation Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1855), passim; Tupper, *Baptist Church of South Carolina*, 317–18; Donald Blake Touchstone, "Planters and Slave Religion in the Deep South," (Ph.D. dissertation, Tulane University, 1973), 71–85; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, Chapter 4; Rev. J. H. Thornwell, *The Rights and Duties of Masters. A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of A Church Erected in Charleston, S. C., For the Benefit and Instruction of the Colored Population* (Charleston: Steam-Power Press, 1850), 48–51.

14. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 6–7, November 24, November 26, 1853, 10–11, November 25, 1854, 19, November 23, 1855, 12, November 14, 1857, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1841, 15, November 11, 1843, 66, BC; Benedict, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, 39.

15. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, passim, BC; see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 7, 1853, 179, BC; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History: A Historical Sketch of the Old Black Swamp Church," Lawton Family Papers, SCL.

16. See Chapters 3 and 4.

175 113 194 17. Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1831, 18–20, BC; *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Diary of William P. Hill, 1833–39, SHC (Hill was a Universalist from Maine who went South for health reasons and became a Baptist preacher); Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 67–68; W. H. Dowling, "Black Swamp Church," n.d., SCL; Baker, *Life and Labours*, 144–45, 157, 169–73.

18. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Samuel Gaillard Stoney, ed. "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 49, no. 1 (January, 1948): 34–36.

17 113 19. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 153; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 34–36.

20. *CAJ*, January 6, 1832; Stoney, "*Autobiography of Grayson*," 34–37.

21. Baker, *Life and Labours*, 154–55.

(194) 22. Racial designations were not yet indicated nor names of slaves included on membership rolls. But the slaves' acceptance into the church was recorded in the Minutes. *Minutes*,

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

17 *Beaufort Baptist Church*, Membership Rolls, and see Appendix C, tables C.1 and C.2; *Min-*
113 *utes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, 11–12, 14, 16, 18–19, 32, 55–56, 58, 66–68, 70; Jones, "Old
(794) Black Swamp Church."

23. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 79–82; Stoney, "Autobiography of Grayson," 36; *Minutes,*
•175 *Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13–17. Within this same article is a section entitled "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 11; and see Appendix C, tables
793 C.1 and C.2.

113 24. Johnson, *Social History*, 103; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20, 57–79; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

25. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 81–106; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 14–16.

26. "Former Slaves Recollect Fuller," in Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 106–113; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864): 589–90.

(795) 27. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 26, 1853, 10–11; November 25, 1854, 16; November 14, 1857, 10–11, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, July 12, 1857, 2–3, 35; November 7, 1857, 241–43, BC.

(127) 28. This is an estimate and represents population based on the 1830 census returns. U.S. Census Office, *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington: T. Allen, 1841), 95; see Appendix C. tables C.1 and C.3.

(795) 29. See Appendix C, table C.2; U.S. Census, *Sixth Census*, 95–96, 226–27; *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 22, 1845, 16, BC; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–50; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 273, BC.

30. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1848, 5, November 1859, BC; see Appendix C, table C.3.

175 31. Baker, *Life of Labours*, 155–56; Busch, "Beaufort Church," 13; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*,
113 15–16, 64–65, 67–75; John Stapleton Papers, SCL, have information on the Rhetts, who bought Frogmore Plantation, St. Helena, from Stapleton in 1836; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; Charlotte Verstille to Nancy Verstille, March 2, 1821, Tristram Verstille Papers, SCL; Diary of John Edwin Fripp, Beaufort Township Library; For Princeton preference see "Notes and Documents; Antebellum and War Memories of Mrs. Telfair Hodgson," Sarah Hodgson Torian, ed., *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (December, 1953): 352; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 88–91; Johnson, *Social History*, 103–11; Hill Diary, SHC; Baptist Church at Black Swamp Mss., Lawton Family Papers, SCL; George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 and 3 in 4 Parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing), II (1) 155–58, 161–62; Jenkins Mikell, *Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels* (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 201; Johnson, *Social History*, 114–15; Henry Noble Sherwood, ed., Introduction, "Journal of Miss Susan Walker, March 3d to June 6, 1862," *Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio* 7 (January–March, 1912): 5.

32. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 201–2; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, Supp. I (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1871), 197–202; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 353–56; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 140–43, 203–11; Mason Crum, *Gullah, Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 35–54.

33. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedmen at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 295.

34. Janet Duitsman Cornelius, "God's Schoolmaster: Southern Evangelists to the Slaves, 1830–1860," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), 16–22; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 140–58.

35. Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller, 140–58*; Smith, *In His Image, But*, 133–36, 138–39; King, 175
South Carolina Baptists, 211–12. 113

36. David Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 69–70.

37. William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, Fletcher Pratt, ed. (New York: 17
Harper Brothers, 1854), 76–77; Busch, "Beaufort Church," sections entitled "Work among
the Negroes," 3 and "Richard Fuller and Slavery," 1; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 113
October 9, 1840, 11, October 8, 1841, 23, October 8, 1842, 39, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist* 567
Church, October 9, 1836, 59; September 24, 1838, 66, SCL; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 104– 794
6; C. C. Pinckney to William Capers, January 24, 1835, HSSCC; *SCA*, September 29,
1843; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 72–73, 184–85, 279, III (3) 202, 274.

38. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 49.

39. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, "Origin of the Colored Societies," October 7, 1859, Business Meeting in which the organization of the societies is discussed, 271–74, January 7, 1842 and November 11, 1840, 12, BC; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 83–104; *CAJ*, January
31, 1834; Field to Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC. 175

40. See Chapter 6. 113

41. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 12, BC.

42. Ibid., 271–72. 794

43. Ibid., 271–74; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II: (2) 185. 567

44. *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 48–49; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, April 9, 1847,
111, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; Rev. Mansfield 175
French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn in Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*
(New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 20. The spelling 113
generally is *Praise* House. Black and white Northerners living among the Gullahs during 567
the Civil War spelled the word thusly. But Samuel Lawton did research in the Sea Islands 346
in the 1920s and indicates the word was "Prays," named for its function as a place of prayer. According to Lawton, Gullah pronunciation of the flat "a" and dropping of the final syllable on many words explain why no difference was noted between "prays" and "praise." Lawton interviewed former Sea Island slaves in the 1920s who referred to the plantation meetinghouse as "Pray House" without the "s" sound, or they pronounced two syllables very distinctly, "pray-ers house." Informants stated it was "Way ooner go fur pray." Gullahs changed verbs into nouns without adding the extra ending. Thus, at the meetinghouse, "One pray. Den Anudder lead a pray'—Dat make two prays." Lawton's argument is reinforced by Patricia Guthrie's more recent fieldwork in the 1970s. According to Guthrie, "Praise houses are also known locally and in the literature as prayer and pray houses." The Gullahs' mastering of double meaning however may also inform the discussion. They often asked white Northerners to "jine praise wid we." Also their anthem, "New Jerasulem," stated, "Sing God praise both night and day." Thus the Gullahs went to the meetinghouse to *praise* and *pray*. Samuel Lawton, "The Religious Life of Coastal and Sea Island Negroes," (Ph.D. dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1939), 54–56; Patricia Guthrie, "Praise House Worship and Litigation Among Afro-Americans on a South Carolina Sea Island," Paper, Sixth Annual Martin Luther King Lecture Series, Purdue University, February 21, 1980, 1.

45. Rawick *American Slave, South Carolina* II (2) 279–80, III (3) 200–202; Diary of John 175
Edwin Fripp, 1857–58 and 1865–68, 24, Beaufort Township Library; Russell, *My Diary* 113
North and South, 71–77; Cuthbert, *Life of Fuller*, 15–20; Minutes, *Beaufort Baptist Church*,
April 9, 1841, 15, May 14, 1842, 34, BC. August 12, 1843, 61–62; October 1, 1853, 180, 567

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

● 175
113
567

BC. A good example of how little attention some masters paid to slaves is provided in the T. B. Chaplin Journal, edited by Theodore Rosengarten. Chaplin probably spent more time supervising his property than most Sea Island planters. However Rosengarten writes: "Because Chaplin had very little to do with his slaves outside of work, we seldom see them in their quarters and only then when peace is disturbed." T. B. Chaplin was on the Episcopalian side of the family and "appears to have invested nothing in the spiritual welfare of his slaves." Some of his slaves did join the Island Baptist church through the "praise house." Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145, 147, 151.

[795]
[794]

46. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1854, November 23, 1855, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, June 10, 1843, 61–62, September 4, 1852, 171, September 12, 1854, 197; November 7, 1857, 241–42, BC; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 147; Pierce Butler to A. Marvin, March 19, 1839, Letterbook, 1838–1840, box 38, Wistar Papers, Butler Section, HSP.

175
113

47. James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Baptist Church Discipline: An Historical Introduction to the Practices of Baptist Churches, with Particular Attention to the Summary of Church Discipline Adopted in 1773 by the Charleston Association* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), 3–4, 10–18, 28; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 62–63. The Baptist religion as it developed in the Lowcountry from Georgetown southward to the Beaufort District was considerably different from that planted in the upcountry. The latter was closer to the frontier Baptist tradition. Unlike "Regular" Baptists of the Lowcountry, the "frontier theology" was a compromise of Arminian and Calvinist views. King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 440–43.

48. Garrett, *Baptist Church Discipline*, 39–44; J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 100–04; Raboteau, *Slave Religion*, 180–81; King, *South Carolina Baptists*, 38, 148–55; Daniel W. Hollis, "The Role of the Church in South Carolina History," *Journal of the South Carolina Baptist Historical Society* 4 (November, 1978): 11–13; Smith, *In His Image, But*, Chapter 2.

175
113
795
794

49. *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, passim, SCL; *Minutes, Baptist Church at Black Creek*, 1828–1922, 15–59, SCL; Jones, "Old Black Swamp Church"; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 9, 1840, 10–11, BC; For information about discipline of slaves in other churches, see Cornelius, "God's Schoolmasters," 228–40; Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry*, 48–52.

50. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, August 12, 1843, 61–62.

51. Ibid., November 11, 1840, 12, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73.

52. Ibid., October 8, 1840, 11, July 9, 1841, 19, July 8, 1842, 34; September 8, 1843, 63; April 5, 1855, 203–4.

53. Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184; Allen Diary, 23, 57.

54. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, November 9, 1844, 83, April 5, 1852, 166, October 7, 1859, 272–73, BC; *Minutes, Euhaw Baptist Church*, February 5, 1832, 11, September 1848, 75, SCL.

175
113
685
[795]
[794]

55. Fripp Diary, 60, Beaufort Township Library; Johnson, *Social History*: 47, 54; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 200–201, 272; Diary of William F. Allen, 62, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

56. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 374, 381; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 668; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 15, Penn School Papers, SHC.

175
112

57. *CAJ*, January 31, 1834; Allen Diary, 37, 71, 87–88; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Whipple, July 3, 1863, AMA; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 32–33, 40–41.

[797]
[567]

58. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 377; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 674; Allen Diary, 32, 143; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158–59, 162, 179–81, III (3) 273–75.

59. Allen Diary, 47–48, 103, 118, 136; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 150–54, 164–65.

60. Allen Diary, 48, 62, 72, 84.

61. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 456–58.

62. Ibid., 124.

63. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, March 31, 1849, 133, May 5, 1849, 134, June 30, 1849, 135, BC.

175
567
112

64. Thomas Wentworth Higginson to Louisa Higginson, October 23, 1863, Papers of Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Allen Diary, 91–92; Typescript copy of Diary of Laura M. Towne (varies from Ms. Diary), April 3, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. I, SHC. Theodore Rosengarten perhaps in support of arguments favoring paternalism on the Sea Islands (a point on which we disagree), maintains that black sentiments toward masters "were sometimes not always understood or accurately rendered by the people who solicited information." He cites by example, Laura Towne's reaction to Clarence Fripp's relationship with his slave Rachel. They lived together openly, and during the war, Fripp deeded over his plantation to Rachel. Towne said Fripp "led an infamous life, too bad to write of, to vile to speak of." Rosengarten implies that Towne's disgust toward Fripp centered on his living with Rachel. Yet Laura Towne was not so naive as to condemn Fripp for this alone, However, she was very upset upon learning that Clarence and his two brothers passed Rachel around for sexual favors. "She lived with her master and his two brothers infamously and her children are almost white," wrote Towne. Thus Towne reacted to the wanton license exercised by the Fripps toward slave women. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 166; Towne Diary Typescript, February 14, 1864, Penn School Papers, vol. 2, SHC.

65. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 162–274; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 358–61, 450–53; Sherwood, "Walker Journal," 34; Fripp Diary, 60; Allen Diary, 103; Towne Diary, 14, 20.

66. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 214–20; Towne Diary Typescript, April 3, 1862; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 593.

67. *Minutes, Prince William Baptist Church*, May 20, 1865, 107, SCL.

68. March 14, 1824, in Lawton Family Papers, SCL; Black Swamp Church Mss., SCL; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (1) 158; William Tillinghast, *Address to Baptist Ministers of the U. S. Who Hold Slaves by A Minister of the Ministerial Conference of the Black River Association* (Antwerp:, 1845), New-York Historical Society.

69. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 21, 1835, 3–4; November 25, 1849, 9, BC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, September 12, 1840, 9, April 9, 1841, 15, BC.

70. *Minutes, Savannah River Baptist Association*, November 25, 1839, 9, BC.

71. Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 158–61; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, III (3) 201; Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 381.

72. Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 374–76.

73. Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 155; Laura M, Towne to Wendell Phillips Garrison, June 8, 1867, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room Cornell University.

175 74. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part I, 594; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 157–58.

113 75. *CAJ*, August 18, 1837; *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 21, 1840, February 3, 1841, September 29, 1343.

[795] [797] 76. As far as total immersion was concerned, Methodist missionaries were willing to baptize slaves in this manner if the slaves so desired. *CAJ*, February 7, 1834; John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833 HSSCC; *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, passim, BC; Rawick, *American Slave, South Carolina*, II (2) 184–85; III (3) 202.

[793] [797] 77. Towne Diary, 26, 54; Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, 26–28; *CAJ*, January 31, 1834, November 20, 1835, July 22, 1836; *SCA*, May 1, 1840, April 8, 1842, June 26, 1843, July 28, 1843.

17 78. *SCA*, February 16, 1844, October 30, 1846.

113 79. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; *Proceedings of Charleston Meeting*, 29–50; Russell, *My Diary*, 77; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d. (around 1850), SHC; *SCA*, March 30, 1849, May 12, 1849, September 6, 1850, July 5, 1855.

80. *SCA*, May 18, 1849; Rosengarten, *Tombee*, 145–47; Fripp Diary, 9, 18, 40, 47, Towne Diary, 22.

8. *Elements of the Head and the Heart: Gullah Interpretations of Christianity*

113 175 1. "The Long Look," 2–3, undated sketch of a former slave, Sam Polite, who lived to be over 100 years old, Penn School Papers, vol. 1, SHC. For discussions on the Union victory at Port Royal see Willie Lee Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 3–12; Theodore Rosengarten, *Tombee: Portrait of a Cotton Planter, Journal of Thomas B. Chaplin, 1812–1890* (New York: William Morrow, 1986), 202–22.

175 113 797 2. Randall Hunt, "Journal of a Traveller from Charleston, S. C. to New Haven, Conn., 1832," SCHS; "South Carolina through New England Eyes, Elmira Coffin's Visit to the Low Country in 1851," SCHS; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, ed. Fletcher Pratt (New York: Harper Brothers, 1854), Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 154–59, 161–63, 229–30; "All Saints, Waccamaw, the Parish, the Place, the People, 1739–1948," Beaufort Township Library, South Carolina, Society of Colonial Dames of America, 22–24, 30–33, 38–43. Joyner's book is a reconstruction of black life in All Saints Parish.

3. W. T. Richardson to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, June 19, 1863, Lydia Fuller to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, July 5, 1864, AMA; Diary of William F. Allen in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 144; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First Days Amongst the Contrabands* (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968; repr. from 1893 ed.), 91–92, 112–14.

4. Edward L. Pierce, "The Freedom at Port Royal," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (September, 1863): 304; Laura M. Towne to James McKim, February 1, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rare Book Room, Cornell University; Allen Diary, 96, 127–28, 151–52.

175 5. Mary Ames, *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1906 ed.), 68; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 74–75.

113 779 795 6. Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 43; Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 320–21; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 49; Joyner, *Down by the Riverside*,

164–66; Edwin S. Williams to Rev. S. S. Jocelyn, January 28, 1863, AMA. For an interesting discussion of the fusion of Old and New Testament figures, see Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 252–55. 175 113 (779)

7 George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., *South Carolina Narratives*, vols. 2 & 3, in 4 parts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 1972) II (2) 180–81. (795)

8. Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (June, 1864): 672.

9. Mansfield French to Revs. Whipple and Jocelyn, n.d., AMA; Ira Berlin, ed., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861–1867, Series II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 49–50; Allen Diary, 57–58; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 145–48; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 26, Penn School Papers, SHC. It is interesting to note that "Old Marcus' " "Massa" was Daniel Pope of the Oaks Plantation. Pope was an important individual in St. Helena's Baptist Church. The Oaks was one of the plantations where Northerners saw so many signs of "Ill-treatment," and was referred to as "de cruelest place." Towne Diary, 32–33. 175 113 771

10. Arthur Sumner to Lt. Joseph Clark, January 23, 1863, Penn School Papers, vol. 4 SHC: Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 218; Higginson, *Army Life*, 231–39.

11. Paul Radin, "Status, Phantasy, and the Christian Dogma," in Clifton Johnson, ed., *God Struck Me Dead: Religious Conversion Experiences and Autobiographies of Negro Ex-Slaves* (Nashville: Social Science Institute, Fisk University, 1945), Foreword, i–ix. 113 771

12. There is much that is interesting and convincing in Radin's analysis of slave religion. But he does not take into account fully, the effects of slave religion on social cohesion in the quarters. Radin ignores the cultural and communal components of slave religion—its most progressive elements. He apparently views slave religion in mainly Christian terms, referring to the slaves' "sin" and desire for cleanliness and rebirth. The self-doubt and vacillation which he maintains the Christian conversion experience dispelled represents an analysis of the role of Christianity only on one level. It does not take full cognizance of other influences on the development of black religion. Perhaps Radin attributes too much to Christianity, and views the slaves' perception of Christianity too simply. The Gullahs' conception of sin differed from that which the masters attempted to instill. The slaves looked beyond the concept of a personal God, an "other world," a "rebirth," and beyond an attitude toward sin that worked against their interests. We agree with Radin that religion helped the slaves escape "demoralization" and "neurosis." Radin credits this "escape" from the degrading features of enslavement to Christianity. But communal and cultural development also provided that extra layer of faith. His interpretation of the psychological features and effects of the conversion experience would be even more insightful if a broader approach to slave religion were taken. Ibid. 771 567

13. John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 377; Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction*, 132; Dorothy Sterling, *Captain of the Planter: The Story of Robert Smalls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1958) 32–33; Ames, *Dixie Diary*, 45; Towne Diary, passim. Northern teachers related that the Gullahs sometimes found ways to gain some literacy during slavery. Two house servants "picked it up from their master's children," letter by letter. Several other people learned from hymn books. Some were never taught but picked up letters "here and there," which enabled them to read "easy sentences." Allen Diary, 62. 113 173 (212)

14. Berlin, *Freedom: Black Military Experience*, 46–54; Allen Diary, 155; Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 68–70, 75–76, 93–97; Higginson, *Army Life*, 39–40. (701)

of Plantation Membership on St. Helena Island, South Carolina," (Ph.D. dissertation, 17 113
University of Rochester, 1977).

5. *SCA*, July 28, 1843; Rupert Holland, ed. *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne* (New 113
York: Negro Universities Press, 1969; repr. from 1912 ed.) 162; Rev. Augustine Roots to 626
Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, AMA; Woofter, *Black Yeomanry*, 243–54; Jenkins Mikell,
Rumblings of the Chariot Wheels (Columbia: The State Co., 1923), 138; Lawton, "Religious 794
Life," 62–63, 69–72; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapters 4 and 5.

6. Towne Diary, passim; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–97, 117–18; Elsie Clews Par- 113
sons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands of South Carolina* (Cambridge, Mass: American Folk-lore 175
Society, 1923), 205–6; Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–23, 69–70.

7. Lawton, "Religious Life," 61–63; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 95–118. The Praise
House membership consisted of households. These units were not always filial and might (794)
consist of several "outside children." Yet if these children "caught sense" in that household,
they were members of that plantation. They were also members of the Praise House, could (592)
be buried in the plantation graveyard, and after slavery, could use the land. Plantation
members tried to keep nonmembers off the land. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 116–22.

8. Pierce, "Negroes at Port Royal," 305; Towne Diary, 55; Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1863), 167–68; Rev. W. T. Richardson to Rev. Jocelyn, August 7, 1863, AMA; Arthur Sumner to Nina Hartshorn, May 18, 1862, Penn School Papers, vol. 4, SHC.

9. Diary of William F. Allen, William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State His-
torical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 106–7, 145, 164; Elizabeth Hyde Botume, *First* [576]
Days Amongst the Contrabands (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1968, repr.
from 1893 ed.), 125–26; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*
(New York: Collier Books, 1962, repr. from 1870 ed.), 48; Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters*
from Port Royal (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, 1969, repr. from 1906 ed.),
198; Charlotte Forten "Life on the Sea Islands," Part I, *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (May, 1864):
592.

10. Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 55–57, 119–23; Grace Bigelow House, "The Little Foe (431)
of All the World," *Southern Workman* 35 (1906): 603; Wister, "Recollections," 14; Allen
Diary, 45; Towne Diary, 13.

11. Ruth Finnegan, *Survey of the Limba People of Northern Sierra Leone* (London: HMS, 1965), 69–80; Robert T. Parsons, *Religion in an African Society*, 99–100; Folkways Research Series, *The Traditional History and Folklore of the Gola Tribe in Liberia*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of the Interior, 1961) II: 55–56; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969; repr. from 1803 ed.) I: 211; Wyatt MacGaffey, *Custom and Government in the Lower Congo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 103.

12. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 139–41.

13. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *The Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press) 103; W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu: A Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (Newport, Conn.: Negro Universities Press, 1970, originally published 1928), 393.

14. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 271–72, BC; James R. Stuart Recollections, n.d., circa 1850, 2–4, SHC; *SCA*, June 26, 1843; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 162, 145; Cooley, *School Acres*, 148–49; Charles A. Raymond "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (September, 1863): Part I, 479.

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

17 15. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, May 14, 1842, 34, BC; "Religious Life," Part I, 478;
113 Lawton, "Religious Life," 71–72.

793 16. David Thorpe to John Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part I, 479–80; Towne Diary, 52, 162; Lawton, "Religious Life," 36–37.

17. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, 272–73, BC; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 93–94; Towne Diary, 52, 162.

18. Towne Diary, 52, 162: John L. Field to George W. Moore, March 21, 1833, HSSCC; *SCA*, June 26, 1840; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," 88–89, 93–94.

•175 19. *SCA*, April 18, 1843, July 28, 1843, September 6, 1859.

113 20. *Minutes, Beaufort Baptist Church*, October 7, 1849, 271–74, BC; *SCA*, October 30, 1846, October 30, 1847. "Seekin' " was practiced among other African-American slaves. See Charles A. Raymond, "The Religious Life of the Negro Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 27 (October, 1863); Part II, 680–82.

[787] 21. Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*, 137–39, Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–81; Higginson, *Army Life*, 194–95; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Lawton, "Religious Life," 143–45; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Allen Diary, 155; Botume, *Amongst the Contrabands*, 254–55.

22. John W. Blamagame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 373; Lawton, "Religious Life," 170–80; Parsons, *Folk-lore of the Sea Islands*, 204–5; Cooley, *School Acres*, 151–53; Mikell, *Chariot Wheels*; Guthrie, "Catching Sense," Chapter 5; Raymond, "Religious Life," Part II, 680–82.

23.. *SCA*, August 11, 1843.

113 24. Mark Hanna Watkins, "The West African 'Bush' School," *Journal of Sociology* 48 (1943): 66–67; Warren L. d'Azevedo, "Common Principles of Variant Kinship Structures among the Golas of Western Liberia," *American Anthropologist* 64 no. 3, 505; James L. Gibbs, Jr. "The Kpelle of Liberia," in James L. Gibbs, Jr. ed., *Peoples of Africa* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), 219–22; Ruth Finnegan, *Limba Stories and Story Telling* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 21–23; Michael Jackson, *The Kuranko: Dimensions of Social Reality in a West African Society* (London: C. Hurst, 1977), 34, 182–84, 202–3; George Harley and George Schwab, "The Mano of Liberia," in Carleton S. Coon, ed., *A Reader in General Anthropology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1960), 348–49, 359–60, 364–65, 369; Folkways Research Series, *Tribes of the Western Province and the Dewoin People* (Monrovia: Dept of Interior, 1955), 11–22; *Traditional History and Folklore of the Glebo Tribe*, 2 vols. (Monrovia: Dept. of Interior, 1955 and 1961) II: 83; Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 47–49; Warren L. d'Azevedo, *Gola of Liberia*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1972) II: 312–13; and "Gola Poro and Sande: Primal Tasks in Social Custodianship," 98–104; M. C. Jedrej, "Structural Aspects of a West African Secret Society," 136; Carolina H. Bledsoe, "Stratification and Sande Politics," 143–45; and Svend Holsoe, "Notes on the Vai Sande Society in Liberia," 97–107, all in *Ethnologische Zeitschrift Zürich* I (1980). For a discussion of the relationship between African-American fraternal orders and West African secret societies, see Betty M. Kuyk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 25, no. 4 (October, 1983): 559–94.

25. Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 34, 204, 206–7, 211, 221; Finnegan, *Limba Stories*, 23–33; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 348–49, 360–69; Little, *Mende*, 225–27, and "The Role of the Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," *American Anthropologist* 51 (1949): 199–

202, 210–12; Gibbs, "The Kpelle," 221–22; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 666–68, 670–72. 113
The fact that initiation into society was not peculiar to Windward Coast and Gambia groups has been mentioned in Chapter 2. Yet its existence elsewhere could reinforce the 000
Poro and Sande influence since no initiation process was as pervasive and germane to sacred and secret life as these associations and their equivalents under different names. In other African-American societies, such as Jamaica, there is evidence of Poro power in socialization and group authority. This is reflected through the Jonkonnu masquerade tradition. Masks were central to some African Poro and Sande means of expression, leadership concealment, and instilling obedience through intimidation. The masquerade and other apparent manifestations of Poro power have been discussed by researchers of Jamaican history and culture. The mask-wearing conveys "supernatural authority" in the Jamaican Jonkonnu, but appears in a "secular/entertainment context." Mask-wearing has no part in Gullah culture but this may be the result of Gullah incorporation of secret society elements into Christianity. In Jamaica, where little Christian instruction of slaves was conducted, the masquerade and festive aspects of the association could continue, whereas there was no base upon which the religious element could remain. Also, covering the face with ash, as done by Gullahs, may be a substitute for the mask and for clay, since both are used in African supernatural and spiritual rituals. For an account of the relationship of Poro and 113
Jamaican culture, see Cheryl Ryman, "Jonkonnu, A Neo-African Form," Part I, *Jamaica Journal* 17, no. 2 (May, 1984): 50–56.

26. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 2–5, 21–22; James L. Sibley and D. Westermann, *Liberia Old and New* (London: James Clarke, 1928), 219–20, 231–32, Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 351; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–14; Little, *Mende*, 121; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 669–674; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–100.

27. *SCA*, June 26, 1840, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1846; Pearson, *Port Royal*, 43–44; [175]
Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 145, 162; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152; Kemble, *Journal*, 84.

28. Harris and Sawyerr, *Mende Belief*, 103–16; Little, *Mende*, 183–85, and "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 204–5; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 355; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 5; John H. Weeks, *Among the Primitive BaKongo* (London: Seeley, Service, 1914), 100–102; E. J. Glave, "Fetishism in Congo Land," *Century* 71 (November–April, 1890–91): 826–27.

29. Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 176–86, 222–26; Little, "Secret Society in Cultural Specialization," 199–200; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 670–71; *SCA*, June 26, 1843, October 30, 1847; Lawton, "Religious Life," 138–43; Cooley, *School Acres*, 152.

30. Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 673–74; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 214, n. 1; Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 15–21; Sibley and Westermann, *Liberia*, 228–29; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 103.

31. Towne Diary, 52. 175

32. Thorpe to Mooney, January 25, 1863, Dabbs Papers, Thorpe Series, SHC. 113

33. Folkways Research Series, *History of Gola Tribe*, II: 17; Watkins, " 'Bush' School," 671–73; Holsoe, "Notes on Vai Sande," 97–104.

34. Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, 2 vols. (New York; Harper & Brothers, 1849), I: 231; *SCA*, August 111, 1843.

35. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 145–46; Rev. Augustine Roots to Rev. Jocelyn, February 8, 1863, and March 6, 1863, AMA; Laura Towne to J. M. McKim, July 1 and August 2, 1862, Antislavery Papers, Rarebook Room, Cornell University, AMA; Towne Diary, 75, 104.

36. Lyell, *Second Visit*, I: 269–70; Robert Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting in Slave Religion of the United States," *The Southern Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Spring, 1985): 34–37.

•175
113

37. *SCA*, April 18, 1843.

38. Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20–22; Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99.

39. Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 195–99; 199; Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 22–23; Higginson, *Army Life*, 41; Forten, "Sea Islands," Part II, 672.

40. Allen Diary, 155; Spaulding, "Under the Palmetto," 199; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xiii; Wister, "Recollections," 17.

41. Holland, *Towne Letters and Diary*, 20; Wister, "Recollections"; Sumner to Clark, July 7, 1862, Penn School Papers, SHC; Allen et al., *Slave Songs*, xiii; Cooley, *School Acres*, 150–51; Towne Diary, 83.

42. John Beattie, *Other Cultures* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 229; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York: Random House, 1966), 190; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36.

43. Erika Bourguignon, "Ritual Dissociation and Possession Belief in Caribbean Negro Religion," in Norman E. Whitten, Jr. and John F. Szwed, eds., *Afro-American Anthropology. Contemporary Perspectives* (New York: Free Press, 1970), 96–97; Jackson, *The Kuranko*, 201–3; Harley and Schwab, "The Mano," 349–50, 359–65; Sciela S. Walker, *Ceremonial Spirit Possession in Africa and Afro-America* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 3–9, 52–58.

44. Lawton, "Religious Life," 77–79; Simpson, "The Shout and Shouting," 36–40.

45. Stuart Recollections, 2–3, SHC.

10. Gullah Attitudes Toward Death and the Supernatural

113

1. Robert Farris Thompson and Joseph Cornet, *The Four Moments of the Sun: Kongo Art in Two Worlds* (Washington, D. C.: National Gallery of Art, 1981), 27; Diary of William F. Allen, 96, in William F. Allen Family Papers, 1775–1937, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," Part II, Atlantic Monthly 13 (June, 1864): 666.

2. Charles Nordhoff, "The Freedmen of South Carolina," in Frank Moore, ed., *Papers of the Day* (New York: C. T. Evans, 1863), 4.

3. *SCA*, July 7, 1843, August 11, 1843, January 19, 1844, August 20, 1847, May 5, 1844.

4. South Carolina Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

5. James Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, or the Life of an American Slave* (New York: H. Dayton, 1860), 150.

6. *SCA*, July 7, 1843.

7. Elizabeth Ware Pearson, *Letters from Port Royal*, (New York: Arno Press and New York Times, repr. from 1906 ed.), 253–54; Diary of Laura M. Towne, 64, 75, Penn School Papers, SHC; Folklore Project, #1655, D-4-27, WPA, SCL.

8. Pearson, *Port Royal*, 252; Irving E. Lowrey, *Life on the Old Plantation* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1911), 81–83; Folklore Project, #1655 and #1855, D-4-27, WPA, SCL; T. W. Richardson to Rev. George Whipple, September 14, 1863, AMA.

9. W. T. Harris and Harry Sawyerr, *Springs of Mende Belief and Conduct: A Discussion of the Influence of the Belief in the Supernatural Among the Mende* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press, 1968), 31–32; George W. Ellis, *Negro Culture in West Africa* (New York: Neale Publishing, 1914), 70; Thomas Winterbottom, *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighborhood of Sierra Leone*, 2 vols. (London: Frank Cass, 1969, repr. from 1803 ed.), I: 236–37; Dennis Benjamin, *The Gbandes, A People of the Liberian Hinterland* (Chicago: Nelson-

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

CHAPTER 2

THE SPEECH COMMUNITY

2.0 Overview

128 Section 2.1 describes the culture which developed in coastal South Carolina during the period of early European and West African settlement. The history of Georgetown County is summarized briefly in section 2.2, with a fuller discussion devoted to a closed community of West African heritage within this county in section 2.3.

2.1 Culture of Coastal South Carolina

175 Among the malaria-infested marshlands of coastal South Carolina, a culture developed between the early and mid-1700's, to which the roots of a distinctive Southern heritage might be traced. As the major port of entry of African slaves imported first from Barbados, and then directly from West Africa, Charleston and its environs provided both a center for acculturation into the ways of the European landowners, as well as a constantly renewed source of contact with West African cultural traditions. Acculturation of the European settlers into the ways of the Africans was inevitable as the population of the Carolina territory became predominately West African in origin by 1720, a dominance lasting

175 into the late 1700's. The significance of this population balance for setting the tone for subsequent development of this important English colony has been largely overlooked. Unlike other major immigrant groups who colonized the Atlantic coast, the West African group brought no written language through which to preserve a record of its activities in the early colonization. Inheritors of a vigorous oral tradition, the settlers from West Africa brought stories, customs, and traditions which are as yet preserved only sporadically in written form by folklorists and in Southern short stories and novels. As the two groups from northern Europe and western Africa lived and worked together in approximately equal numbers, a new culture evolved which has been different enough from mainstream culture in the United States to evoke stereotyping, and which bears testimony to the impact which West African traditions has had upon its development.

121 The Southern heritage which took root in this colony and spread west to Mississippi, and even into Texas in later years, embraced many complex patterns of human interaction: a hospitality familiar to the chiefs' homes in southern Nigeria; an orientation to family and kinship strong enough to foster jokes about Southern cousins; musical and storytelling traditions which defy description as a blend of their two major sources, and yet seem different from either; and distinctive speech patterns which have been used by various dramatists and novelists to evoke humor and scorn, while

121 consequence of their situation. The rise of plantation pidgin
197 and creole languages can be documented in the Americas where
slave labor was used during the early colonial period, and
later in other colonies and in Hawaii where contract plantation
labor was used. The West African immigrants to colonial
South Carolina followed this third pattern of linguistic
adaptation.

Brought to work the rice plantation in the marshlands
175 of coastal South Carolina, the West Africans provided the
567 labor which made for the initial economic success of the
Carolina colony. A strong case has been made that they also
provided the knowledge of rice cultivation and processing
which allowed the early European land-owners to effectively
adapt to a sub-tropical environment so unlike their native
Europe (Wood, 1974). At any rate, the establishment of rice
as the base of the colony's economy coincided with the heaviest
period of slave importation. Around 1730 two new ports were
opened to share the growing export trade with the initial
port at Charleston. One of these ports was Port Royal, some
sixty miles south of Charleston. The other was Georgetown,
sixty miles to the north of Charleston. The early rice
121 plantation area in Georgetown County along a strip of land
between the rivers and the Atlantic Ocean is the focus of
the present linguistic study.

2.2 History of Georgetown and Its Environs

In the earliest days of the Carolina colony, the Georgetown area served as a frontier for the first permanent settlement at Charleston. The port at Charleston had been successfully established by a small group of planters and slaves from Barbados in 1670. European settlers in the Georgetown district engaged in Indian trade and supplied naval stores for the Charleston port. The major trade of the Carolina colony initially was with European colonies in the West Indies; Carolina functioned almost as a colony of Barbados and other Caribbean islands (Wood, 1974), supplying food for the labor force of the sugar plantations and wood for the barrels in which the finished product was shipped. The economic base of the colony and of the Georgetown district changed as rice cultivation became established around 1730. One of two new ports opened at this time to handle the growing rice trade, Georgetown was soon surrounded by large rice plantations. According to figures provided by Rogers' history of Georgetown County (1970), the Georgetown district was producing almost half of the total U.S. rice crop by 1840. Its sister port to the south of Charleston, Port Royal, came nowhere near this production level. Except for two decades of indigo cultivation to supply the English trade when the French and Indian Wars cut off England's previous source in the French West Indies, rice remained the economic base of the district until the late 1800's. In the period following

175 the Civil War, a combination of planter bankruptcy, successive years of disastrous flood tides, and the opening up of lands further west which could be cultivated by machinery instead of expensive hand labor, put an end to the rice economy. The economic base of the district again became chiefly forest products. In the early 1900's the former rice plantations were bought up by rich Northern industrialists for use as vacation homes, bringing welcome outside money to an economically depressed region.

175 567 The close relationship between rice as Georgetown's economic base and the large numbers of African immigrants brought to this district can be seen in the South Carolina figures for slave importation during the period of the establishment of rice as a major crop. Rogers reports, "From 1720 through 1726 the average annual importation was 616 slaves. The average for the years 1731-1738 was 2,089. The opening up of the lands around Georgetown was one of the chief reasons for the increase" (1970:29). Most of the slaves were bought in Charleston and then transported up to Georgetown by boat through Winyah Bay. A few, however, were brought directly from West Africa through the Georgetown port, with 112 in 1774 being the largest number reported by Rogers. For a five-year period between 1735 and 1740, a full seventy percent of the slaves brought to South Carolina seem to have come from the Angola region of Africa (Wood, 1974:335), long considered a possible source of the term Gullah used for both

175 567 the coastal blacks and for their language. Other large numbers came from the Coast of Guinea, Gambia, the Gold Coast, the Windward Coast, and other undesignated parts of West Africa. Very few originated in the West Indies during this period. From reports of travellers and missionaries, indications are that the earliest slaves imported from the West Indies around 1700 spoke a more standard variety of English than did the large number of immigrants who came directly from West Africa (Wood, 1974:175). Hancock (1975) maintains that the variety of English spoken in Barbados, the source of the first South Carolina slaves, was never a creole, but was a local metropolitan variety of English. For the direct ancestor of Gullah, Hancock posits a Guinea Coast Creole which developed in the latter half of the sixteenth century on the upper Guinea Coast, and was brought to the new colony by the slavers and immigrants from that area. While the time and place of origin of the language adopted by the immigrants from West Africa may be impossible to determine with certainty, the conditions for the development of an interlanguage were present. Large numbers of people were uprooted from their homelands and cultural traditions and thrown together with others of similar status, speaking several different languages and needing to communicate with each other on a frequent basis.

175 The language background of the European settlers in the Georgetown district was primarily English, although some

● 175 French Huguenot families were in their number and were allowed to use the Book of Common Prayer in a French version (Rogers, 1970:20). The early landowners were usually sons of English and French planters in the Charleston area, trying their luck in the northern frontier. To the west of Georgetown proper, in what is now Williamsburg County, townships were established by Scots-Irish and Welsh settlers. Scots were frequently merchants and officeholders in the district. From such a mixture, it is safe to assume that it was not always the standard English dialect of southern England which was spoken by the European landowners and their overseers to the West African slaves. The McDavids (1951) and others have noted the preservation of seventeenth century English dialect forms in isolated Gullah-speaking areas.

175
567
(162)
Very early in the history of the Georgetown district, Africans outnumbered Europeans. Federal census figures of 1830 indicate that 1,940 white persons and 18,000 persons of color (both slave and free) resided in the district (Wikramanayake, 1973). An important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall, which constituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite. A Grand Jury Presentment in Georgetown for the fall term of 1835 reported

175 567 that ten masters of 1,700 slaves had been absent from their property for the last twelve months, and that some 15,000 slaves on the tide swamp plantations were managed by no more than forty proprietors during the summer months (Wikramanayake, 1973:158-9). The general picture which emerges of the district in the century between 1730 and 1830 is that of a region whose population was overwhelmingly of West African descent, whose economy was based on intensive hand labor of a crop familiar to many of these immigrants in their homelands, and whose most prevalently spoken language was an English creole.

175 While in its more prosperous days Georgetown was a cultural center and was far from isolated either economically or socially from other populous centers in the state its position after the Civil War was one of geographic isolation in important respects. With the fall of the plantation economy, boat traffic along the extensive network of rivers in the county was no longer reliable nor frequent. The rivers and marshes which had provided the flood waters for the rice fields impeded the building of roads. As late 484 as 1918, a trip inland to the state capitol, some one hundred miles away, could be a two-day trip over unmarked sand or mud roads (Vaughan, 1969). Until the major bridges were built to span the rivers emptying into Winyah Bay in the early twentieth century, a trip from rural areas to the county seat at Georgetown for supplies or legal transactions could

162 Wadmalaw has 2,024 people. There are 963 males and 1,061 females. The median age is 19.6 years. Forty-seven point three percent are under eighteen years and 6.8% of the island's people are 65 years old and over. Over 90% of Wadmalaw's population is Black.

Yonges (St. Pauls) Island has 9,235 residents; 6,314 of this total are Black. The median age is 19.9 years. Forty-six point five per cent of the population is under eighteen years and 6.7% 65 years old and older.

Edisto has 1,374 residents. There are 672 males and 702 females. The median age is 19.7 years. Nine per cent of this community is 65 years and over, 46.1% are under eighteen years old. One thousand one hundred and fifteen of Edisto's population is Black.

BLACK SEA ISLAND FAMILIES

361 Black islanders generally live on the inner acreage of the islands. This pattern exists and has been maintained for a number of reasons: (a) a strong agricultural history in which farmers built homes on or close to their planting acreage, (b) long term economic deprivation where Blacks could not afford new homes which in part contributed to (c) the generational building habit of constructing newer dwellings either close to or as extensions of existing houses.

• [175] With the exception of (imported) Black city and military

175 families living in housing developments on James Island,
361 many island families pre-date the civil war. Many of these
[551] families carry the surnames of the large plantations of that era. These native families barring extreme tragedy do not actively move to different sites on or between islands. It is common place to find families who have maintained their residence since and before the turn of the century. While
-484 many of the islanders born before 1900 have visited major cities (i.e., Charleston, New York, Washington, D.C., Savannah, etc.) fewer have visited all five of the Islands. Those that have, did so by car and report that these visits came after 1940. Before this period those who visited adjacent islands did so by walking and by muledrawn carts.

16 While Whites have been coming onto and suburbanizing the fringe areas of the Sea Islands, Black Islanders are leaving and dying out. It is extremely rare to find Black parents with children age eighteen and over who report all their children either at home or living on the Islands. The fact that the median age of the island population descends with distance from the mainland and where higher percentages of Black families reside supports this migrating trend. The component of change caused by birth versus death rates for the county between 1960-1970 shows a net migration of -6.3%. For Blacks this change rate was -19.7%. Furthermore, Wadmalaw in this period lost about -13% of its residents.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
(491) over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston
or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts
and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice,
indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished
well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices
(226) on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of
casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging
from earliest childhood encoutors to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),

> 177 an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their
> susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in
> 136 the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall,
> which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to
> homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the
> other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

•175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For examplo, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400
Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained
2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al.
197 1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and economic
independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

•175 567 Of equal importance, if that be possible, with the native quality of the Gullah vernacular, was the environment under which they lived in this country. They seem to have been imported almost exclusively to the sea-islands and coast of two states, South Carolina and Georgia. This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the [243] [248] chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity.[4]

000 Even today, two generations after the disintegration of the social forces that brought them into existence, there remain impressive traces of these fine old estates, some abandoned and fallen into ruins, a few still kept up, some turned into hunting preserves, some still being farmed on a smaller scale. They stretch in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the "street"; square mile after square mile of woodland, marshland, and level fields, once planted to rice, but

---

[174] [197] as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."

[4] If this seems to savor of the high-flown idyllic plantation tradition, fostered by professional Southerners, romantic literature, melodrama, and minstrel balladry, be it recalled that the ideal picture came closest to being realized in tide-water Virginia and in the rice districts of South Carolina. In regard to these localities it would be hard to overstate the facts. "Charles Dudley Warner, for example, dazzled by the sheen of life in the Carolina rice districts exclaimed, 'Nowhere in this leveling age . . . so much splendor'." F. P. Gaines, *The Southern Plantation*, Columbia University Press, 1924, p. 64. "Phillips says of the rice section: 'The towns were in sentiment and interest virtually a part of the plantation community and many prospering townsmen looked toward plantation retirement, carrying, as it did, in some degree, the badge of gentility, as the crown of their careers." *Ibid.*, 145, 146.

[113] Crevecoeur (*Letters from an American Farmer*, London, 1782.) called the life around Charleston 'the gayest in America'; "Olmstead himself (*Seaboard Slave States, A Journey Through the Seaboard Slave States*, New York, 1856) refers to the rice planters as 'having less vulgar display and more intrinsic elegance than in any distinct class among us'." *Ibid.*, p. 154.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

000 now with ditches choked, banks and dam breached by time and tide, grown up in wild rice and marsh grass; the ideal habitat of deer, duck, bob-white, and wild-turkey—the hunter's paradise.

•175 567 Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart. The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters. The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occasionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged.[4]

175 The Civil War and Freedom made far less difference in their lives than might have been expected. During the strenuous Reconstruction period their dependence and isolation, if anything, increased. The financial and social system of the South was broken up; the white planters and their families were impoverished, and many moved to town or city or even emigrated to the up-country, and the Negroes were left to shift for themselves. There amid the wreckage of great plantations,[5] in the broom-sedge

---

[197] [4] Concerning the effects of such continued and unusual isolation within the dialect itself, Mr. Bennett remarks: "There are all grades of negroes, from the rudest field hands to residents of villages and house-servants, who speak with very different degrees of inaccuracy and illiteracy. There are, especially among the islands, plantations so remote from all contact with civilization as once to have developed dialects within the dialect, the characteristic speech and peculiar idioms of one plantation differing so from those of another as to make it very possible for the adept to determine by a negro's peculiarity of dialect what community, sometimes what island, and sometimes almost what plantation was the spokesman's place. Singular peculiarities upon one plantation may be—or once were—totally lacking upon the next holding, though but a few miles distant." I, 336, Note.

[567] [5] How utter was the wreckage and complete the reversal in many cases may be dimly realized from the following contrasted pictures: "Many folks of the old regime were destroyed by the war—not merely soldiers on the battlefield, but civilians white and black, driven or lured from shelter, sustenance, and sanitation. Slaves died by uncounted thousands, and many of their masters were utterly broken. The

175 fields, the lonely rice marshes, the windy pine-woods, the dying rice-fields, on the little truck-farms and cotton patches of the lowlands, they remained eking out an existence as best they could, almost as untouched by civilization as if they had still been dwelling in the forests of equatorial Africa.

181 Thus with the passing years, owing both to origin and environment, they have come to constitute a highly specialized group among the Negro population of the South. In common with other Negroes they share in the main Negro characteristics, but in them these characteristics are sharply heightened and accentuated. They are almost unbelievably primitive, childlike, excitedly religious, ignorant, illiterate, humorous, shrewd, shiftless beyond expression, superstitious, unstable, likeable, loyal, full of a homely untutored philosophy, gifted with picturesque speech, humble, kindly, generous, good-natured, and entirely without malice. It hardly need be said that they likewise possess in high degree the universal Negro trait of having two quite separate and distinct sides, one for the white race and one for themselves.[7] Living close to nature they are

---

[567] case of Thomas Hamilton Couper of 'Hopeton' on the Altamaha River is an example. Sir Charles Lyell, recognising him as a distinguished fellow-naturalist, paid him a long visit in 1846 and made laudatory notes upon the library, the household, and the plantation with its five hundred slaves. Another pen has left an account of his burial in 1866, after his death in poverty and despair:

'The steps of the church were broken down, so we had to walk up a plank to get in; the roof was fallen in, so that the sun streamed down on our heads; while the seats were all cut up and marked with the names of Northern soldiers, who had been quartered there during the war. . . . . The funeral party arrived. The coffin was in a cart drawn by one miserable horse, and was followed by the Couper family on foot, having come this way from the landing, two miles off. From the cart to the grave the coffin was carried by four old family negroes, faithful to the end.' Ulrich B. Phillips, "Plantations With Slave Labor and Free," *American Historical Review*, July, 1925.

[7] This trait is of critical importance. The Negro is a superlative actor and pantomimist, and lets the white man see and know just what the Negro wishes him to—and no more.

Failure to take this into account leads to strange conclusions. It is the reason why so many visiting observers, even though earnest and sincere, have received and recorded impressions of the Negro in the South that are highly plausible—and more highly erroneous.

[113] For a shrewd and cynical summing-up of the case, see L. M. Hussey's "Homo Africanus", *The American Mercury*, Jan., 1925. See also Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1925, pp. 6 and 9.

Following are three well-balanced expressions on this point, two looking to the

19 fied form of English," both in phonology, grammar, and vocabulary, with elision of difficult sounds, shortening of words, modification of every difficult enunciation, and a minimum of forms for person, number, case, and tense.

Thus, simple to begin with and uniformly responsive to all possible leveling influences, Gullah is as nearly an uninflected tongue as it is possible to conceive.

19
•175
567

George Philip Krapp in "The English of the Negro" (*American Mercury*, June, 1925) gives the following conjectural picture of its origins: "The assimilation of the language of the Negroes to the language of the whites did not take place all at once. Though the historical evidence is not as full as might be wished, the stages can be followed with some certainty. When the Negroes were first brought to America they could have known no English. Their usefulness as servants, however, required that some means of communication between master and slave should be developed. There is little likelihood that any masters exerted themselves to understand or to acquire the native language of the Negroes in order to communicate with them. On the contrary, from the very beginning the white overlords addressed themselves in English to their black vassals. It is not difficult to imagine the kind of English this would be. It would be a very much simplified English—the kind of English some people employ when they talk to babies. It would probably have no tenses of the verb, no distinctions of case in nouns or pronouns, no marks of singular or plural. Difficult sounds would be eliminated, as they are in baby talk. Its vocabulary would be reduced to the lowest possible elements. In short, it would be a language of very much the same kind as those which have developed elsewhere under similar circumstances. It would have resemblances to the Beach-la-Mar of the Western Pacific, the Pidgin English of China, and the Chinook jargon of western America. As the Negroes imported into America came from many unrelated tribes, speaking languages so different that one tribe could not understand the language of another, they themselves were driven to the use of this infantile English in speaking to one another."

See also a similar account by James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1925, pp. 42, 43.

The actual historical picture is thus sketched by Mr. Bennett: "At the time of the arrival of these negroes in the American provinces a considerable proportion of the population was composed of white bondsmen, indentured mechanics and 'redemptioners', the laborers of the colony, among whom the newly-arrived negroes learned their English. Their vocabularies were small and very markedly dialectal, in the majority of instances a dialect which had been handed down from father to son for several generations, preserving closely the peculiarities of earlier times, in many cases Elizabethan and Jacobean.

"The Africans, plastic as they are by nature, quickly lost their own language, and acquired imperfectly the dialects of the British peasantry among whom they worked, and by whom very generally they were directed. The main reason was, perhaps, that, at the height of the trade, owing to the danger of conspiracy, large groups of negroes upon great plantations and in any considerable establishments, were generally made up, by preference, of negroes of different tribes, speaking languages and dialects unknown to one another. They were mostly young, for youth retains no lasting memories and acquires a new language with greater ease.

"The new negroes were parcelled out among the early bond-servants, and, later, among the trained servants, preventing their congregating in a body, hastening their familiarity with their new duties, and more quickly learning the language of their monitors and wardens. This plan was operative from very early days in obliterating the many African dialects and tongues native to the Negro slaves." Personal letter to Professor Yates Snowden, of the University of South Carolina, Jan. 22, 1918.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

114 origin, and because of its indiscriminate use I have suppressed it whenever possible.[6]
533 I notice that the only writers who used the term "spirituals," prior to 1909,
[128] were those who collected the bulk of their material in South Carolina. References were made to Georgia "spirituals," but Georgia was off the beaten track and, in consequence, few examples were given. In such collections as Hampton's *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, in editions up to 1909, no mention is made of "spirituals"—the songs are called "slave hymns." Nor does the name occur in Barton's *Old Plantation Hymns*, published in 1898. Our Negroes in southern New Jersey, who had come from Virginia, never used it. The first time I heard it applied to a Negro song was in 1909 on St. Catherine's—a sea island half way between the Savannah River and the Altamaha. I was told by Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County, and by Julia, born on St. Simon's Island, that they always called their own songs "spirituals," although one old grandmother called them "ant'ems" to the end of her days.

But why was the name adopted by the slaves of South Carolina and Georgia and not by those of the states to the northward? A bit of early history may perhaps
●175 supply the answer. When a band of Puritans who had settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1630, heard of the need of work among the Indians of South Carolina, they migrated with their pastor in 1695 and settled at a spot they named Dorchester, on the Ashley River, about twenty-six miles from Charleston. Here they stayed until 1750, but the unhealthy location caused them to move on to St. John's Parish in Georgia. There, they established another Congregational church which they called Midway. At this church the Negroes sat in the gallery as was the custom in various other places.[7] Olmstead in *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (1853–54) gives an account of the concern shown by members of this Midway community for the moral enlightenment of their slaves and says, "I heard them spoken of even so far away as Virginia and Kentucky. I believe that in no other district has there been displayed as general and long-continued an interest in the spiritual well-being of the Negroes."[8]

---

[6] *Ben Davis told me the way he knew the age of a song was by the way it made him feel. "The old ones make you feel good, the new ones don't make you feel anything." I know of no better test.*

[7] *Where there was no gallery they sat in the rear of the church—if a separate service was not held for them.*

[8] *Olmstead also tells of a religious service held by the crackers in an isolated section south of Savannah. To this day such a service can be seen and heard in conservative Negro churches. It is significant that in the North white people were never encouraged to go into a Negro*

•175 These transplanted New Englanders were outstanding people, and undoubtedly made their influence felt in South Carolina just as it always has been in Georgia. The center of Revolutionary ideas was in their community at Midway. It sent two signers of the Declaration of Independence to Philadelphia, and among its notables were six foreign missionaries and eighty-two ministers. When the British burned their church, during the Revolution, the members built another—in 1792—that was a replica of the Congregational churches seen throughout New England; and, when the parishes became counties after the Revolution, they called theirs Liberty County. Although the members of this church—organized in Massachusetts, removed to South Carolina, and then to Georgia—had been in the South for generations, their sympathies were clearly with their Northern co-religionists: their pastors came from New England and one of them was the Calvinist, the Reverend Abiel Holmes, father of Oliver Wendell Holmes. Under these conditions it is unlikely that they omitted the use of the *Bay Psalm Book*, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1640), of which the revised and enlarged edition of 1651 was called the *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs of the Old and New Testaments*. The first edition having been adopted by nearly every congregation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, there is no reason to believe that it was any less popular with the God-fearing colonists who went to the Southern outposts. The slaves of the group of Puritans who had settled on the Ashley River probably sang *Spiritual Songs*[9] with their owners just as the slaves of their descendants at Midway undoubtedly did. In all likelihood the name "spiritual" struck the fancy of the Negroes, and accounts for its application to the songs of their own composition. Naturally enough these songs had little in common with the hymns sung with the white people, and were used only at such services as took place—apart from the slave-owners—during the week at prayer meeting held at the praise-house or the cabin of a deacon, or at a "settin'-up" or a funeral.

[533] Before the year 1800 the old hymn book, which had gone through more than

---

church. but in the South, they have always been welcomed—a survival of an earlier custom. If I had known this when I first went to St. Simon's I could have learned what I needed to find out without the delay to which I was subjected. But I was from the North—and was told nothing about the Negro. Before the first World War pushed the War Between the States into the background, anyone who hailed from New England was suspect if he showed an interest in the colored people. This attitude still exists in certain places on the South Carolina coast. To those who know the unsavory record of Northern carpet-baggers, such a situation is not surprising.

[9] Before 1745. Spiritual Songs for Children, by *J.* Wright, was published by John Newbery.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points
of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection,
I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)
Narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
With here and there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together there
Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the
old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the
singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them,
but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

CHAPTER ONE

Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are
533 found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of
177 loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the
178 first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On
533 the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration pro-
177 vided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

---

[175] [1] *In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 through the corrections that are likely to follow—which may perhaps be a quicker way.

As already mentioned, the lack of a system of musical signs is a serious handicap which interferes with a better knowledge of the authentic slave songs, and
533 makes any estimate of their age pure guesswork. Nevertheless, we do know that twenty blacks from Guinea were sold from a Dutch man-of-war to the tobacco
•175 planters of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619. Sometime between that date and, let us say, 1760, these songs probably assumed the characteristics they now bear, for they appear to have become as crystallized by 1776 as folksongs ever are. But unless old church or family records turn up describing the musical reaction of the slaves to their owners' interest in the salvation of their souls, we are unlikely to find out when, how, or where the songs originated.

533 The slave songs or "ant'ems,"[3] as they were sometimes called in Georgia before the Civil War and are called in the Bahamas to this day, may have resulted from a spark of divine fire; and the blacks, like so much tinder, may have carried them far and wide through the agency of the slave markets or the removal of the planters from one state to another. Then again, they may have been the outcome of nothing more than an elaboration of simple African themes under the influence of the richer harmonies of the Colonial planters. In other words, the tunes may represent a gradual development over a period of a hundred and fifty years, rather than a full-blown inspiration.

175 For all we know, the songs may have originated in Virginia, for there were two
533 hundred thousand blacks in the state at the time of the first census in 1790. It is possible, however, that South Carolina provided the nursery, as the majority of the Negroes in the coastal section of that state and Georgia who today sing primitive "shout" songs and spirituals are Baptists, and Charleston was one of the first proselyting centers of that denomination in the Colonies between 1684 and 1746. It is on record that the zealous efforts of William Screven caused the Baptist principles to be "widely disseminated throughout that region" and the preponderance of Negro Baptists in all the Low Country of South Carolina and Georgia indicates the success of his activities. But we have only historical data to bolster up any of these suppositions, and the chances are that details concerning the origin of the songs will never be learned.

---

[3] *Old English for anthem. Diana, from Turk's Island, B. W. I., snorted when I called "Study War No Mo'" and "Who Built the A'k?" spirituals. "Them's not spirituals, them's ant'ems!"*

Evidence of their pre-Revolutionary existence found in Professor C. L. Edwards' *Bahama Songs and Stories* led me to several of the out islands for the purpose of verification. I discovered that Professor Edwards' book included many tunes and verses still sung, though not consecutively, throughout the "Black Border" of South Carolina and Georgia—a fact explained by the author when he says: "The first settlements were in some cases made by families of loyalists who fled from the American colonies during the Revolution." Miss Mary Moseley, in her *Bahama Handbook*, states that the number of whites and Africans was about equal before the arrival of the American loyalists with their slaves—an influx which doubled the white and trebled the Negro population. Elsewhere, Miss Moseley tells us that the slaves numbered from six to seven thousand, and that the Caicos Islands were originally settled by loyalist refugees from Georgia. Stark's *History of the Bahamas* gives further information about the Georgia contingent: "At the close of the American Revolutionary War, twelve families of loyalists settled here with from two to three hundred slaves; previous to that time there was not more than thirty acres of land cleared in all the Caicos." [4]

Such references explain why "much community of both poetical and musical phrase" came to exist between the songs given in Professor Edwards' collection and those found in sections from which the loyalists fled at the time of the Revolution. In H. E. Krehbiel's *Afro-American Folksongs*, their common origin appears to be overlooked in the assertion that the Bahama songs "show a higher development than do the slave songs of the States"—a fact which is undeniably true of those found in books, but not of those that have escaped, through isolation, the corrupting influence of such Western music as the Negroes usually hear.

The remoteness of the Bahama out islands accounts for the preservation of the genuine eighteenth-century Negro melodies; and on one of the islands may still be heard the tune that accompanied the "ring-play" called "Emma, You My Darlin'," done on their knees—forty years ago—by the barefooted Negro children of St. Simon's Island. How this game song as well as many of the religious songs given in *Bahama Songs and Stories* came to exist on such widely separated islands as those of the Bahama group and St. Simon's may be explained by local history in two ways.

---

[4] *Diana, from Turk's Island, told me one of the Caicos Islands was near her old home. Her sister lives there, and I could get plenty of "ant'ems" from her. Bethell, in* The Early Settlers of the Bahamas, *lists the names of one quarter of the two thousand loyalists who took up land on the various islands of the group.*

175 533 The first possibility is that they arrived in both places from the mainland of South Carolina. In 1795, a few years after the exodus of South Carolina and Georgia loyalists to the Bahamas, Major Pierce Butler gave up his estate on the Ashley River near Charleston and established about eight hundred slaves on his rice plantation on Butler's Island and his near-by cotton plantation on the "North End" of St. Simon's. Or the songs may have come from Savannah, via Nassau, with the entourage of Captain Alexander Wylly, a loyalist, who was obliged to flee from Georgia to the Bahamas immediately following the Revolution. However, when England began to consider the abolition of slavery in her colonies, this gentleman—who apparently had slaves to lose—became indignant and returned to Georgia. After he had fought against his friends and relations and suffered exile, it seemed outrageous to him that he should be robbed of his property. The fact that a thriving trade existed at that time between Nassau and Darien, only a few miles—by water—north of St. Simon's, and the ease with which he could transport his family and his belongings to this island, probably account for his choosing it as a final resting-place.

In addition to the circumstantial proof of the age of the songs given by history, there is also evidence of continuity of development in the singing of such old Bahama Negroes as Elvira Albury of Harbor Island, born in 1849, and Isabella Bean of Eleuthera, born before 1860, and of such centenarians as Liverpool, born on St. Simon's in 1828, and Janey Jackson, also born on St. Simon's in 1826—to say nothing of Old Quarterman, born in Liberty County in 1844. At the same time it would be reassuring to have more references in books concerning the character of the songs of the slaves. William Bartram provides in a brief passage in his *Travels* the only eighteenth-century description of Negro music I have been able to find.[5] Apparently he was favorably impressed with what he heard and saw on a model plantation in Georgia, on the banks of the Savannah River. In a description of life on board a slave ship that occurs in *Captain Canot, or Twenty Years of an African Slaver* (1827–1847), there is presented in the following words a pleasanter picture of the Middle Passage than is usually given us: "During afternoons of serene weather, men, women, girls, and boys are allowed while on deck to unite in African melodies which they always enhance by an extemporaneous tom-tom on the bottom of a tub or tin kettle." This short paragraph contains the only admission I have seen in ante-bellum books that the slaves brought their "melodies" with them. (Illustration 6). A

---

[5] "*The sooty sons of Africa, forgetting their bondage, in chorus sung the virtues and beneficence of their master in songs of their own composition.*" (April, 1776)

A, [For Illustration 6, see Category 142, plate facing p. 33--Analyst]

175 533 Of all the descriptions of slave music that have come down to us, there is none to equal in closeness of observation those given by Fanny Kemble in her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation.* The fact that she was a musician as well as an actress no doubt accounts for the keenness of her perception.[6] The lines that follow have been so widely quoted that I hesitate to give them again, yet it would be unfair to leave them out of such an account as this, since they apply so perfectly to the singing of the descendants of the very slaves who inspired them.

"The high voices all in unison, and the admirable time and true accent with which their responses are made, always make me wish that some great musical composer could hear these . . . performances. With a very little skillful adaptation and instrumentation, I think one or two barbaric chants and choruses might be evoked from them that would make the fortune of an opera."

Although Liverpool, the last of the Pierce Butler slaves, claimed to remember his former mistress, her anti-slavery views [7]—voiced to the slaves and the free alike—clearly fell on deaf ears, for the patriarchal Negro lost no opportunity to tell what a fine master he had, and when explaining that he was "Butler born," he invariably added, "an' Butler I shall be until I die." Seated on the whiffletree bar of his ox cart, (Illustration 4)[A] accompanied by a few descendants of other Butler slaves, this Negro with the courtly dignity of the Old South gave such a dramatic demonstration of ante-bellum singing for the benefit of his Maussa's granddaughter, Lady Butler, as the actress herself would have approved. With whole-hearted fervor and more accuracy and sweetness of tone than one would have expected from a centenarian, Liverpool proved what I have so often noticed: that primitive Negro music is more dependent upon the perfection of its rhythm and the precision that a good leader can inspire in the responses of the chorus, than upon the virtuosity of the individual.

In the Negroes' lack of concern for mere sweetness of sound as an end—with their major interest invariably shown in rhythm, in the melodic balance of a song, and in the performance of the group as a whole—can be seen the same fundamental 000 approach as is displayed in primitive African sculpture. Some examples, dug up by Leo Frobenius at Ife, on the Niger River, are believed by him to belong to the tenth century. This date is of interest in giving an idea of the age of the African cul-

---

[6] *It is unfortunate, however, that her capacity for self-identification led her astray when the atrocity tales told by her husband's slaves aroused her emotions.*

[7] Her Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838–39, was first published, *for purposes of propaganda,* in 1863.

A. [For Illustration 4, see Category 142, plate facing p. 32--Analyst]

533 which produce an effect similar to that of castanets), or play upon the well-seasoned 534 and polished "old jawbone" of some ox, horse, or mule [19] with the aid of a blacksmith's rasp or a large key (a rhythmic tooth-rattling performance), or extract music (of a kind) from the U-shaped iron clevis used for hitching horses to the old-fashioned plow—which, when suspended by a string and beaten upon with its pin, makes a very fair "tr'angle," as the ante-bellum Negroes called it. If you live in the neighborhood of a cane-brake, there may be an old Negro who can demonstrate the kind of music to be obtained from a set of reed-pipes, called "quills," made from graduated lengths of cane tightly wedged into a frame. On occasion, a washboard—played with a thimble—and a frying pan may be added. Now and then a fiddle, "box" (guitar), mouth-organ, or jew's harp is heard in rural districts, but rarely a drum—except in the hands of musically illiterate members [20] of the Sanctified Church who have done as much real harm to the Negro's innate gift of rhythm as have the white man's hymn books.

In New Orleans, wooden horns and home-made drums (made out of nail kegs), with skin tightly stretched over one end, were used in olden times, but were forbidden on plantations where the blacks outnumbered the whites. Planters were [202] well aware of the ability of some of their slaves to use them in the same manner as we use the Morse code,[21] and it was not considered safe to risk the general uprising which might have resulted.

533 The good-natured ingenuity of the Negroes in circumventing plantation rules speaks well for their ready wit, and it always rouses my admiration to see the way in which the McIntosh County "shouters" tap their heels on the resonant board floor [22] to imitate the beat of the drum their forebears were not allowed to have. Those who hear the records of the musical chants which accompany the ring-shout—made for me by Dr. Lorenzo D. Turner—cannot believe that a drum is not used, though how the effect is achieved with the heels alone—when they barely leave the floor—remains a puzzle (Illustration 24). A

---

[19] *It may even be decorated with ribbons, as in the old days.*

[20] *Joe Loman once said, "The Sanctified people must think God is deef, they make so much noise."*

(175) [21] *In 1740, following the Stono uprising of 1739, the great slave act was passed. One section prohibited the beating of drums or the blowing of horns, although in cities this provision was not rigidly observed.*

(171) [22] *I am told, however, that in South Africa the natives use their heels on the sun-baked clay of the village square in precisely the same manner.*

A. [For Illustration 24, see Category 535, plate facing p. 144--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

181 aloof, and never lose a chance to mislead and to poke fun at the white man behind his back. But I have noticed that they often reflect the treatment meted out to
666 them in slave days. Geoffrey Gorer, in *Africa Dances*, calls attention to this fact: "If you can watch a man dealing with negroes you have no need to ask his opinion about them; and if you can watch a man's negroes you will know the chief points of his character. They mirror their masters faithfully and terribly." This approach has always interested me, and I have traced the ancestry and former ownership of
181 many of our Glynn County Negroes. Cusie[9] Sullivan provided me with a striking exemplification of Gorer's statement. His good manners excited my curiosity, and
567 when I encountered his father, Ben, at a Negro funeral, they were explained. Mrs.
175 Shadman, who had known Cusie's grandfather, Bilali, gave me his history. He was the butler at the Couper plantations, at Cannon's Point on St. Simon's, and at Hopeton on the Altamaha River. The courtesy of the three generations of Sullivans known to Mrs. Shadman is a tribute to the genuine distinction of the Couper family.[10]

However, the self-respecting dignity[11] of this group of Negroes undoubtedly had its roots in Africa. Sir Charles Lyell devotes considerable space to a description of life on Hopeton plantation and to "African Tom."[12] Lyell tells us: "Under the white overseer, the principal charge . . . is given to 'Old Tom,' the head driver, a man of superior intelligence and higher cast of feature. He was the son of a prince of the Foulah tribe [West Soudan], and was taken prisoner, at the age of fourteen, near Timbuctoo. The accounts he gave of what he remembered of the plants and geography of Africa have been taken down in writing by Mr. Couper, and confirm many of the narratives of modern travelers. He has remained a strict Mahometan, but his numerous progeny of jet-black children and grandchildren, all of them

---

[9] *In* West African Studies, *Miss Kingsley says that among the Fanti Negroes a boy born on Sunday is called Quisi.*

[10] *By the same token, one of my most helpful singers—Ben Davis—who was trained from early childhood by Mrs. Shadman, mirrors the thoughtful dependability of her character.*

[11] *Egerton, in* African Majesty, *makes it very clear that he was impressed with the great dignity and presence of the uncle of the King of Bangangté in the French Cameroons. The many wives of the King also excited his admiration: "They were dignified, self-possessed and definitely regal."*

[12] *Professor James A. Grant of Darien, tells me that his great-grandfather, Thomas (called Carcastone among his own people), was a driver on the Couper plantations. In his youth he had heard his grandfather, Thomas (brother of the Couper's Bilali), say that he was named for his father who was an African prince and a Mohammedan. Apparently "African Tom" and Bilali's father, Thomas, were one and the same.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

181 567 ● 175

marked by countenances of a more European cast than those of ordinary negroes, have exchanged the Koran for the Bible. . . . During the last war [1812] when Admiral Cockburn was off this coast with his fleet, he made an offer of freedom to all the slaves belonging to the father [John Couper] of my present host, and a safe convoy to Canada.[13] Nearly all would have gone, had not African Tom, to whom they looked up with great respect, declined the proposal. He told them he had first known what slavery was in the West Indies, and had made up his mind that the English were worse masters than the Americans. About half of them, therefore, determined to stay on St. Simon's Island, and not a few of the others who accepted the offer and emigrated had their lives shortened by the severity of the climate in Canada."

(212)

Z. Kingsley, in his *Treatise on the Patriarchal Form of Society*, published some time before 1829, cites "two instances to the southward [of Charleston], where gangs of negroes were prevented from deserting to the enemy by drivers . . . and what is still more remarkable, in both instances the influential negroes were Africans, and professors of the Mohammedan religion." It is clear that Kingsley had John Couper's "Old Tom" in mind, and that the other Mohammedan was Spalding's Bilali,[14] whose so-called *Diary*, written in Arabic, on Sapelo Island, is now in the possession of the Georgia State Library in Atlanta. Pages from the *Diary* have been incorporated in the end-paper designs of this book.

212 567

This manuscript has aroused keen interest among anthropologists, and the photostatic copy I sent to Melville J. Herskovits has been translated by Joseph Greenberg.[15] During the summer of 1939 Mr. Greenberg visited Northern Nigeria, under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, and through his fluent knowledge of Arabic won the confidence of educated Malams in the city of Kano. They assisted him in deciphering certain parts of the "diary" and in locating the places in an important Mohammedan legal work [16] from which most of the manuscript derives. It is amusing that the first result of Mr. Greenberg's study was to

---

[13] *Admiral Cockburn harried our coast during the War of 1812, and as late as January, 1815, destroyed the orange orchards on Cumberland Island.*

[14] *Charles S. Wylly, in* Seed Sown in Georgia, *tells us how, in 1813, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding, relied upon Bilali to aid in the protection of his property on Sapelo with its "five hundred slaves, many fresh from . . . Africa."*

[15] *A résumé of the results of his work has been published in the* Journal of Negro History, *July, 1940.*

[16] The *Risala* of 'abu Muhammad 'abdullah b. 'abi Zaid 'alquairawani.

175 Yarrabuh, Medina, and Binty (probably Bintu), the youngest, who was the only
567 one of the family group who could not speak French. The others spoke English,
650 French, and their native tongue. Why was it that Binty spoke only two languages?
124 This fact raises still another interesting question.
791

Katie's grandmother was Margaret and Shad's was Hester. Both were apparently
175 Mohammedans, since Katie and Shad remember fragments of their prayers
567 and, in particular, the rice balls which the half-famished children were given when
the sun went down on a certain fast day. They were vague about the time of year,
252 but both gave me the identical recipe for making this ceremonial food. Katie said they got a peck of white rice from Darien and soaked it overnight. In the morning surplus water was drained off and the rice was put into the well-washed mortar. All the larger children were set to beating it. When it was fine, enough white sugar was added to make it taste like white loaf-sugar candy. Unlike a similar West African rice ball,[19] this type was not cooked. Shad said the pieces were made into dumplings, and that his grandmother used syrup if she could not get sugar. But Katie particularized and said the paste was rolled into balls "the size of small fowls' eggs" which were then put on a fanner and set aside to harden. When the children lined up to receive the rice balls, which were called "sarika,"[20] the grandmother's eye was on the lookout for grimy hands. Any child whose hands were not perfectly clean had to leave and do a good job while the others waited. As she handed the sarika to a child she would say either "Sarika dee" or "Ah-me, Ah-me."

Portions of the prayer used by Bilali and his wife as they "got down flat," when it
175 came time to pray, were remembered by both descendants. The two Mohammedans
567 would hold a long string of beads. As Bilali moved a bead along he would say "Karo
782 baro." Fatima would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." When he moved the next bead he would say: "Saka baro" and again she would say: "Ah-me, Ah-me." Shad says he remembers hearing that Bilali ended his prayers with "Mohammedoo." According to Charles S. Wylly, in *Seed Sown in Georgia*, his grandfather, Thomas Spalding,

---

She gives the names of the days in the Fanti language, and it is interesting to find that a boy
551 *born on Monday is called Kujot—probably Cudjo—and on Tuesday, Quabina, which was the*
170 *name of a faithful slave at Retreat Plantation. Friday's child was called Kufi, and it is now easy to see where Kuffie Jones got his name.*

[19] *Described by M. J. Field, in* Gold Coast Food *(The College Press, Pamphlet No. 3).*

[20] *Dr. Turner attributes the name sarika to the Bambara tribe, which inhabits the greater part of the French Sudan. This tribe is said by Geoffrey Gorer to be fanatically Mohammedan, and reared in a warlike tradition.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

175 had slaves of "Moorish or Arabian descent, devout Mussulmans, who prayed to
567 Allah . . . morning, noon, and evening." Wylly adds in a footnote that three times
[782] each day Bilali faced East and called upon Allah.[21] When he died his Koran and praying sheepskin were buried with him.

Other details concerning Bilali are given by Georgia Bryan Conrad in her "Reminiscences" which appeared in the *Southern Workman* in 1901. She tells us that "On Sapelo Island, near Darien, I used to know a family of Negroes who worshipped Mahomet. They were all tall and well-formed, with good features. They conversed with us in English, but in talking among themselves they used a foreign tongue that no one else understood. The head of the tribe was a very old man called Bi-la-li. He always wore a cap that resembled a Turkish fez. These Negroes held themselves aloof from the others as if they were conscious of their own superiority."[22]

124 Bilali's descendants on Sapelo have given me much interesting data on old notions which probably came out of Africa. To avoid collusion I never question two Negroes together, and always check the material given by one with that from others.
822 Several Sapelo Negroes have told me that red was such a popular color with the
175 Africans that many were captured by slave-ship captains hanging red cloth on the
567 deck of a ship. When the Negroes unsuspectingly came aboard, they took a long

---

[21] *Thomas Astley in Vol. II, of his Collection of Voyages and Travels, 1745, gives extracts from the writings of various African explorers. Their observations on the Mohammedans of the Senegal and Gambia region throw some light on the religious customs of the Mohammedans on Sapelo. One said: "the natives along the Gambia worship the one true and only God, whom they call Allah." Another remarked that "Mohammedanism found among these people is very lame. . . . It consists in . . . two or three ceremonies as the Ramadhan, or Lent, The Bayram, or Easter, and the practice of circumcision." Francis Moor made explorations in the same section in 1730 and Astley quotes him as saying: "they [the Fuli] are much like the Arabs, whose language is taught in their schools . . . they are generally more skilled in the Arabic than the Europeans in the Latin; for most of them speak it, though they have a vulgar tongue of their own, called Fuli. . . . Their humanity extends to all, but they are doubly kind to their own race . . . support the old, the blind and the lame. . . . They are rarely angry and the author could never hear them abuse one another. . . . They are always very clean. . . . They are strict Mohammedans and only a few drink brandy." Another explorer specified the time at which the Mohammedan Negroes said their prayers: "at Day-break, Noon, and at Sun-set." Sieur Brüe reported that "they keep standing a considerable time, looking . . . towards the Sun-rising; then they advance two paces, muttering something between their teeth: Then they lie flat on their faces: next rising on their knees . . . and afterwards they kiss the earth, several times."*

[22] *It is estimated that Mrs. Conrad saw the Sapelo Bilali shortly before 1860.*

175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
822 did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
354 or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
775 kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
782 were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure
you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could
get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she
did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling
the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone
on the other side afforded the same immunity.

175 I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
567 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master
764 as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern
Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a
beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in
1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

---

[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in* West African Travels, *that red was a favorite color of the spirits ("spirits always like red") and the most frequent charm-case was of that color "to flatter and please" them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion: "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

(777) [25] *A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.*

175 her master, Thomas Dabney, who was born in 1798. Grannie had been given to him
567 by his mother with the words: "You can trust her in everything." When he went
764 to Mississippi she went along with his other slaves, but apparently the journey was
too hard, and Grannie died soon after their arrival. "The master himself led the
funeral procession, and all his children followed the coffin as mourners. He ordered
out the whole plantation, every one who could walk, and every man, woman, and
child carried a torch. The sound of the funeral hymn and the blazing of the many
torches, as we wound down the road to the dark shades of the burying-ground,
made a painful impression on me as a child and caused many a secret tear." In her
Journal Fanny Kemble describes another night funeral on Butler's Island, to which
she reacted in a similar manner—except that she did not shed her tears in private.

In describing an African burial, Mungo Park mentions that the body is dressed
764 in white cotton, wrapped in a mat, and then "carried to the grave in the dusk of
171 the evening, by the relations." From this I am led to believe that the custom may
have originated in Africa. Further evidence to support such a view is furnished by
Monroe M. Work, who says, in an article in the *Southern Workman* (1907), that
it was an old Hamarian practice to bury the dead in the dark. It may be that our
764 Negroes carried out some such traditional observance when they threw their pine
torches beside the grave and went back without them. We know the belief in spirits
(775) is strong, and it is possible that in this way the spirit of the dead man was prevented
from following the living to their homes. Be that as it may, the pine torches were
never removed, and the nearest I have come to an explanation of why they were left
was given me by Katie Brown: They belonged to the dead. You must not take away
(784) a thing that is theirs. If, at the burial, a button falls to the ground from your dress,
(777) you must not pick it up. Bad luck follows you if you do.[28]

A nephew of Katie's gave me an instance of what happened to a Sapelo colored
764 man he knows, who helped clean up the graveyard. After he had put the brush in
776 piles to burn, he thriftily changed his mind and brought in his ox and cart to carry
775 it away. Instead, he had to back his "team" into the fence and leave in a hurry when
attacked by an immense dog—as big as a yearling calf—that had never before been

[28] *If you start to do something for the dead—whatever it is—you must carry it through. Laura*
(775) *never reached the grave of her son with the flowers she had apparently gathered for it, and in*
a few months she died in an asylum. The headstone carved out of the marble top of a wash-
stand by young Aaron for his father's grave is still in the Cabin. He has been in serious trouble
ever since he left it there.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

175 a short time through Florida before its annexation [1819]; yet one fourth of the 567 population of this lower country is said to have come direct from Africa."[36] A little calculation indicates that he was misinformed either as to smuggling or as to population. I am inclined to believe it was the former, as the last slaves to be smuggled into Glynn County arrived in November, 1858,[37] on the *Wanderer*, and the last African of that group died in Brunswick only a few years ago.

Because of the illicit slave trade that continued for economic reasons to such a late date on the coast of Georgia, we probably have more African survivals here than are to be found in sections of the Atlantic coast which were settled before the slave traffic was technically abolished. This may account for the similarity between 538 the proverbs of Africa and those in use among our older Negroes. A few illustrations 171 will suffice to establish the relationship: When I asked Joe—so dark that protective coloration serves him in the shade—why it was that I never had any trouble with dark Negroes, while those of a light color were often a different matter, he explained with a wide grin: "High yalla pizens the stream." On another occasion I asked him what to do about a certain singer who persisted in double-crossing his group. His reply probably had its origin in Africa: "My ole gran'mother use t' say: 'Them's the kind you gotta feed with a long spoon.'" In *Suriname Folklore*, Melville and Frances Herskovits quote a proverb found among the Negroes of Dutch Guiana that is very similar: "When you eat with the devil then you must have a long fork." In McIntosh County I heard a Negro preacher tell his congregation that when a man dug a pit for his neighbor, at the same time he dug one for himself. Another Suriname proverb carries the same warning: "When a person digs a hole to put another in he himself falls into it." Once I said to Bessie that it looked as though she had forgotten me. In disclaiming such a charge she quoted "the old people" as saying: "Never forget the bridge that carries you over." A. F. Chamberlin reports a corresponding proverb from the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, which warns against kicking away the ladder by which one rose. As can be seen, the advantage of using a proverb lies in its indirection. It allows no accusation to be pinned against the speaker, and generally displays a whimsical humor that is more telling than any literal presentation of facts.

[36] Second Visit to the United States.

[37] *J. A. Tillinghast, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *says that the importation of Negroes from the Guinea coast did not cease until after the Emancipation Proclamation, and quotes Professor W. E. B. DuBois* (The Suppression of the Slave-Trade) *as saying that the Act of 1807, forbidding the trans-Atlantic slave trade, "came near being a dead letter."*

•175
567 gun. Mrs. Arnold, who was the daughter of Captain Stevens, of Frederica, told me
[159] how her father's slave, Old Grace, had been captured in a "goober patch" in Africa.
Old Grace and some members of her tribe had made a stealthy night raid on the
stockaded garden of a neighboring village. Although Mrs. Arnold told me the story
over twenty-five years ago, I can still see Old Grace trying to climb the fence when
she and her companions were discovered.

We are supposed to dig our graves with our teeth, and inferentially Grace's
567 appetite for peanuts was her undoing, but no grave was dug for her, if the story of
754 her end is true. Mrs. Stevens always cautioned her children to keep away from Old
159 Grace's cabin, for she boasted that she had eaten pickaninnies in her native land,
and "the meat was sweet." She was also reputed to be a hag and many a "marsh
175 tacky"—found in the morning with a matted, tangled mane—was she supposed to
have ridden. When the Federal forces—followed by an iniquitous carpet-bagger[49]—
took over St. Simon's, Captain Stevens, although a Dane and a non-combatant, was
sent to Fort Delaware, where he died. His widow and children were sent to Savannah. After the war was over, they returned to Frederica and found that Old Grace
had disappeared. No one would talk about her, but the story got around that her
[683] own people had grown tired of her wicked ways, and had staked her out at low tide
in one of the salt-water creeks. If the water rose above her head, that was an act of
God, and was no concern of those who did the deed. In Miss Kingsley's *Travels in*
[171] *West Africa*, I have lately found that this mode of drowning was one of the popular
methods of disposing of African witches.[50]

178 Besides survivals of language, customs, and beliefs, we have survivals of particular skills. Such useful ones as carrying unwieldy bundles on the head, making canoes and mortars by hollowing out logs, weaving baskets—particularly the flat type used for fanning rice—are a commonplace in the South, and may not on this account

---

[49] *His name was Eaton, and he is said to have come from Maine. He purported to be a minister and insisted on remarrying the Negroes at twenty dollars a pair. Although the price was high, they were enabled. through his assistance, to occupy the homes of the refugee planters. Before Mrs. Stevens was out of her house the Negroes came in and made their choice of rooms—generally a family to a room. When the Postells returned to Kelvin Grove Plantation after the war there were ten Negro families in their house. Not a shutter was on it. Every one had been taken down to make corn bins in the basement, and every pane of glass had been shattered by the gun-boats. Can we wonder that the Southerners called us "Damyankees"?*

[50] *Miss Kingsley believed that the black man recognized "in a dull sort of way" that witchcraft meant the same thing as poison. She tells that he very generally regarded "the best remedy for witching as being a brisk purgative and emetic."*

796 During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon
535 service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt
178 that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the con-
177 ventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious
dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congrega-
tion. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the
Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely,
535 though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider
(123) the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's
Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so se-
cretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of danc-
ing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

---

(175) (529) [2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

533 them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation
(177) for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it,
either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more
melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of
dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping,
which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized
by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by
N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions
of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to
1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion
of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied
• 175 up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a
567 host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther
west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that
a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a
long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is
given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820
to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took
their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked
175 with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs
567 of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers
were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying
533 songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded
(177) by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to
the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle
175 songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication
533 with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was
"sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between
the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs
of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

CHAPTER FIVE

Religious Songs

533 About 1830, before "Daddy" Rice popularized the secular songs of the Negro, 175 the music of the slave was considered to be of no more importance than the carvings of his African contemporaries. It was not until certain Northerners—early in the War Between the States—began to write of the beauties of the religious slave songs of the Port Royal section of South Carolina that Southerners awakened to the fact that the Negro race was essentially musical, and that its compositions could be taken seriously.

175 Up to this period there was very little written concerning the slaves, and anything more must be gathered inferentially from the migrations of the pioneers, who naturally did not leave their slaves behind them. The first expansion of our Southern frontier took place in the neighborhood of 1632 into the Albemarle section of the Carolinas, and thence southward along the coast to Beaufort, South Carolina. In the first years of the nineteenth century the rich lands of the Indians were opened up in West Georgia and Alabama; and at that time began the trek west over the Federal Road, a movement which accounts for the wide distribution of the favorite slave songs of the eastern seaboard. The migration was all in a westerly direction, and it is not reasonable to imagine that the camp-meeting songs and white spirituals, popular in Kentucky and Tennessee at that period, came east against the tide. In fact, investigation in the Bahamas indicates that the slave songs were well established on the mainland by 1776. The loyalists of the Georgia and Carolina coast fled at the end of the Revolutionary War (1782) to the out islands of the Bahamas, and history tells us that the slaves they took with them trebled the black [533] population. I find that the best of the early religious songs are sung on the out islands today, much as they are here in isolated sections.

121 Since I am a Quaker and am not familiar with the ritual which characterizes

794
796
"Covenant meetin'," now called "Pure Mind Meetin'," was formerly held at the last prayer meeting before Communion Sunday, and was of service in keeping track of the members and making sure, from their own words, that they were "livin' in union." No more meetings of this character have been held at the "South End" of St. Simon's since Betty Brown paid the penalty of false testimony. She got up and told the members: "I'm at peace with everybody." Then, as she was leaving the church, she said: "I'm goin' home t' put Josie [her crippled grandson] out the house." She walked to the step, fell, and never reached home alive.

●175
159
(533)
(291)
(829)

BELIEVER I KNOW

This song, sung on Sapelo by Katie Brown, while sitting under her tall magnolia tree, reflects the peace of her surroundings. Although she was born about 1850, her voice is remarkably true and sweet. She tells me that the record book of the Spalding Plantation has her age as ten years when the War Between the States began, but she believes she was two years older, for she wore a shift[4] at the time her family left Sapelo and "went to the Main" for refuge on the Stephens Plantation in Bryan County. In December, after the "Big War" was over, they walked to Savannah. There Katie's mother, Cotty Grovenor, petitioned the Freedman's Bureau to let her return to Sapelo. "March was comin' and time to plant." She remembers distinctly how sore and swollen her feet were from walking. Cotty had to soak them in warm water each night.

533
539

I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know, I know Lord
  Believer I know
I know the road so thorny
  Believer I know
I know the road is thorny
  Believer I know

---

[4] *The slaves count their age by some such event. Katie seemed to be proud of the fact she was old enough to wear a shift. Shad Hall must be younger, for he still wore a "binyan" (apparently an African word), which was the kind of shirt worn by young boys before they wore pants. With a grin, he told me their first pants had no pockets so that it would be less easy for them to steal eggs.*

I GWINE T' BEAT DIS RICE

533 243 "J. P." learned this half-chanted composition from his grandfather, Old Quarterman. He never sings the words twice alike, but the rhythm is always the same.

533 539

I gwine t' beat dis rice
Gwine t' beat 'um so
Gwine t' beat 'um until the hu'ks come off
Ah hanh hanh (nasal)
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' cook dis rice when I get through
Gwine t' cook 'um so
Ah hanh hanh.
Ah hanh hanh.
Gwine t' eat mh belly full
Ah hanh hanh
Ah hanh hanh.

ROWING SONGS

501 533 461 175 A hundred years ago, when boats offered the most comfortable and convenient mode of transportation, and provided the sea islands of South Carolina and Georgia with their only means of communication with the mainland, the rowing songs were an important adjunct to the work of the oarsmen. English travelers rarely failed to mention them. Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in North America* (1827–28) tells of leaving Darien—"A neat little village"—and proceeding down the current to St. Simon's Island "in a canoe, some thirty feet long, hollowed out of a cypress tree. The oars were pulled by five smart negroes, merry fellows and very happy looking. . . . They accompanied their labor by a wild sort of song not very unlike that of the Canadian voyageurs, but still more nearly resembling that of the well-known Bunder-boatmen of Bombay."[22]

Fanny Kemble frequently mentioned the singing of the Butler Island oarsmen in her *Journal*, written ten years later. In 1845, Sir Charles Lyell[23] tells of being met at Darien by Mr. Hamilton Couper, who came down the river from Hopeton "in a

---

(171) [22] *The editors of* Slave Songs of the United States *say that "Mr. E. S. Philbrick was struck with the resemblance of some of the rowing tunes at Port Royal to the boatmen's songs he had heard upon the Nile."*

[23] Second Visit to the United States.

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

175 long canoe, hollowed out of the trunk of a single cypress and rowed by six negroes,
501 who were singing loudly and keeping time to the stroke of their oars." He went on to
533 say: "For many a mile we saw no habitations, and the solitude was profound; but
461 our black oarsmen made the woods echo to their song. One of them taking the lead, first improvised a verse, paying compliments to his master's family, and to a celebrated black beauty of the neighborhood, who was compared to the 'red bird.' The other five then joined in the chorus, always repeating the same words. Occasionally they struck up a hymn, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity, and which, though nothing irreverent was meant, sounded oddly to our ears, and, when following a love ditty, almost profane."

Lyell's account of his canoe trip from Hopeton to visit Mr. Couper's summer
175 residence on St. Simon's Island, fifteen miles distant, is of interest for several rea-
567 sons. In describing the Negro houses on Butler Island, where the party landed on
(342) their way, he tells us they "were neat, and whitewashed, all floored with wood, each
(114) with an apartment called the hall, two sleeping rooms, and a loft for the children"
—which is contrary to what Fanny Kemble had written about the selfsame houses
[243] a few years earlier. He also mentioned seeing ricks of rice raised on props five feet
high, to protect them from the sea, which, during hurricanes, has been known to
rise five or six feet. His observations on the mental development of the slaves are
(243) particularly significant: "It is evident that on these rice farms, where the negroes associate with scarcely any whites, except the overseer and his family, and have but little intercourse with the slaves of other estates, they must remain far more stationary than where, as in a large part of Georgia, they are about equal in number to the whites, or even form a minority. . . . In Glynn County, where we are now residing,
[162] there are no less than four thousand negroes to seven hundred whites,[24] whereas
in Georgia generally there are only 281,000 in a population of 691,000 or more whites than colored people."

175 I give these figures because they explain why more distinctive slave songs can
567 be found in the rice swamps and cotton plantations of the adjoining sea islands than
243 in the Piedmont section where Anglo-Saxon influence has always predominated. In
all probability we have the malaria mosquito and the absentee landlords to thank
[164] for this. In Africa the black race had developed an immunity to malaria—which they

[24] *About the same ratio as when I first went to St. Simon's. Charles Spalding Wylly states that in 1810 almost every acre of arable land on St. Simon's was under cultivation. There were fourteen plantations and a slave population of about 1200.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25]
(164) fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and
higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much
to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
(533) rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
(539) way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
(178) all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I
hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes
always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining
plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century
among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the
duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr.
Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a
musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last
violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain
these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
(177) by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The
statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
(184) shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the
identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee
and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
114

---

[25] *The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.*

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia
St. Simon's Island

184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation,
called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were
also rice planters.

175 In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had
mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small
farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite
of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious
songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

---

[28] *They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

(177) *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

I

GULLAH: THE DIALECT OF THE NEGROES OF ST. HELENA ISLAND

INTRODUCTION

THE NEGROES of St. Helena Island speak a dialect 197
which is peculiar to the Negroes of the tidewater section of South Carolina and Georgia.[1] So unusual is the dialect of this area that an up-country person on first hearing it is likely to think that he is listening to a foreign language. It is as different from what is generally thought of as Negro dialect as the speech of the white Georgian is from that of the Chicagoan. With its rapidly spoken phrases, its staccato accents, and its rising and falling intonations, it sounds to the average American more like French or Spanish than any English he has ever heard.

This dialect is known as Gullah, as are also the Ne- (101)
groes who speak it. How the word Gullah came to be so
applied cannot be determined satisfactorily. Certainly it 101
has no ethnological significance, for the slaves were not 175.
derived from any one tribal group in sufficient numbers 567

(113)

---

[1] This dialect was first brought to the attention of scholars by such works as Mrs. Caroline Gilman's *Recollections of a Southern Matron*, 1837; William Gilmore Simms', *The Wigwam and the Cabin*, 1845, and other stories; and Allen's *Slave Songs of the United States*, 1861. Later writers like Joel Chandler Harris, Mrs. A. M. H. Christensen, and Charles C. Jones published collections of folklore in the dialect. Still later the dialect began to receive some attention for its own sake, chiefly from John Bennett, Ambrose Gonzales, Marcellus S. Whaley, and Reed Smith. The articles by Bennett, published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Oct., 1908, and Jan., 1909, and the recent study by Smith, published as Extension Bulletin No. 190, University of South Carolina, contain the best analyses of the dialect. I have drawn freely from these and other sources for suggestions. For further references to the literature on Gullah, see the bibliography.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

101 175 567 for that group to play an important role. Such evidence as we have, although it is rather meager, seems to indicate that the tribal composition of the slaves was a hodge-podge of a score or more of West and Central African peoples. In the records of the Charleston slave merchants and in the files of *The South Carolina Gazette* will be found statements which prove the diversity of African stocks among the slaves. A recent research reveals that the following African tribes or regions were specifically mentioned in the Charleston slave market:[2] Gambia River, Whidah, Fantee, Coromantine, Bassa, Bance Island, Angola, Bight, Calabar, Messe-Congo, and Ebo.

101 174 In an excellent study of the Gullah dialect, Professor Reed Smith, of the University of South Carolina, comments as follows on the probable origin of the term Gullah:[3]

> Both the word Gullah and the Negroes so named came from the West Coast of Africa, but exactly where has not been agreed upon. There are two widely-held conjectures. One is that Gullah is a shortened form of Angola, the name of an African West Coast district lying south of the Equator and the mouth of the Congo River. A small but positive bit of evidence to this effect is found in an entry of the Charleston City Council, under the year

---

(113) [2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade in South Carolina Before the Revolution." *American Historical Review*, July, 1928. Miss Donnan makes this pertinent comment in a footnote: "It is a puzzling fact that the marked differences between the negro tribes, regarded as so important on their arrival, seem to have been speedily lost sight of. Advertisements of seasoned negroes, in so far as the writer has examined them, seldom emphasize the tribe or African locality from which the negro came; notices of runaway negroes occasionally mention place of origin but frequently do not. The evidence seems also to indicate that country-born negroes had lost all distinguishing characteristics or that the planter had grown oblivious to them with his longer association with the negroes."

(113) [3] *Gullah*, pp. 7-8. The Charleston City Council entry mentioned is probably that found in *An Account of the Late Intended Insurrection*, etc., published by A. E. Miller, Charleston, 1822.

101 of slavery? Certainly there is something to be said in favor of the accuracy of the "Gullah or Angola" derivation.

THE CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE GULLAH DIALECT

197 Gullah has been called the most African of any of our Negro dialects, yet it can be traced back in practically every detail to English dialect speech. There has long been a popular belief in this country to the effect that Southern white speech is what it is because of the Negro. This idea needs to be reversed, for both the Negro and the white man in the South speak English as they learned it from the latter's ancestors. An understanding of the historical and cultural factors pertaining to the relations of whites and Negroes in the early days of slavery in South Carolina is essential to an appreciation of the origin of the Gullah dialect. These may be sketched very briefly.

• 175 Speaking of the environment in which the Gullah dialect was born, Smith says:[5]

> This section, from Colonial days to the Civil War, was the richest and most cultured of that part of the South. Rice, the
> (243) chief low-country crop of that day, was extremely lucrative under
> (248) slave-labor, as was the silky, long-staple sea-island cotton. Large plantations of thousands of acres were the rule, on which the
> (567) wealthy planters lived in characteristic, often feudal prosperity. . . . Before the war, each plantation was a little world apart.
> 175 The slaves lived together, segregated in their own special quarters.
> 567 The Negroes outnumbered the whites in the ratio of tens and hundreds to one, and only the house-servants and body-servants came into close contact with their owners. The large majority of field-
> (178) hands habitually saw only each other, their overseers, and occa-

---

[5] *Gullah*, pp. 9-10.

sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and 175
grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, 567
growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost 178
complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body
of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental
background remained in a state of arrested development and were
handed down practically unchanged.

This picture is accurate for the period following the 175
introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English.
The most numerous class in the colony before the 175
slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured 177
servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by 567
side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in 191
various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves
learned most of their English.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
567 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified
197 tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was
left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro
heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than
the English dialect which the white servants and laborers
around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.[a] Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes
remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they
were now more isolated than before, because many of the
white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

---

[a] The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

000 of the low-country aristocracy. An expert in South Carolina linguistics can listen to a low-country man for a moment and tell whether he is from Georgetown, Charleston, Edisto, Beaufort, or some other locality. The low-country speech has certain characteristics which distinguish it from the up-country speech, as is true in the case of the Negro, yet there are local variations depending upon the English background and subsequent environment of particular families and neighborhoods.

•175 The Negro's almost complete loss of African language
567 heritages is startling at first glance, but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome im-
191 possible. In order to accommodate the slave to the routine
197 of plantation life, as well as in the interest of discipline
and order, the planters saw to it that new Negroes were distributed so as to work with seasoned slaves. This broke up tribal bonds and made difficult the survival of Africanisms. The learning of English was a practical necessity. It was the only medium of linguistic exchange. Only thus could the slave understand his overseer, converse with his fellows, and comprehend the interesting things which took place about him. So thorough was the language substitution that there now remains only a handful of words which are indisputably of African origin and which have attained to a respectable degree of diffusion.

000 American white speech areas—New England, Northern, Western, Southern, etc.—owe their origin to the dialects of England.[7] Characteristics of Southern speech, for

---

[7] Only recently was it realized that this is true. American scholars have been in the habit of supposing that our dialect areas represent different stages in the development of standard English in England. But there was really no standard three hundred years ago except among the literary and court people. Even today there are places in England where standard English has made little difference

10: Johnson S-4,5 (no date) 1930
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

FOLK TALES

The folk stories of St. Helena Island represent several different heritages. Undoubtedly the majority of the stories were brought there by Negroes, but not all of them are native African stories. Some appear to have been carried from the Iberian Peninsula or from the Cape Verde Islands by sailors to West Africa, whence they were brought by the Negroes to the United States. Others are of Asiatic descent, having been taken into Africa long before the slave trade began. Still others were European tales learned by the Negroes in the West Indies and brought by them into the Southern States when they were sold to the early planters on the Carolina and Georgia coast. Added to these are European tales brought over by the English settlers or imported more recently by other Europeans. The culture of the sea-island Negroes is, therefore, singularly rich in folk stories. 538 171

As Mrs. Parsons has pointed out, there is a close kinship, not only in type of story and subject matter, but in dialect and idiom, between the St. Helena tales and the folk stories told by the Negroes of the Bahamas. The relationship is not accidental, for there was a cross-migration between the Bahamas and the Southern colonies. West Indian and other island planters are known to have moved to South Carolina and Georgia, bringing slaves with them, and in the early plantation days in these colonies, the planters preferred the seasoned slaves of the West Indies over the raw Africans. On the other hand, the turn of political events in the American colonies caused some, particularly the United Loyalists, to move to the Bahamas and other islands, taking their households with them. 538 171 175 567

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)

CHAPTER I

THE PRIZE OF THREE NATIONS

SAILING NORTHWARD in 1525 a hundred leagues from 175
La Florida, Pedro de Quexos, pilot of Ayllon's two
caravels, suddenly came upon a neck of land protruding
abruptly seaward between two magnificent sounds. A
closer examination showed the headland to be beautifully [139]
wooded with pines, cedars, and mighty live oaks grace-
fully festooned with funereal moss. Quexos thought that 175
his saint, Elena, had certainly brought him good fortune
in leading him to this garden spot on her day, and so in 103
her honor he christened the projecting land in the name
of Spain *Punta de Santa Elena*, and the broad river which
bordered it Santa Elena. Today the point is the eastern
projection of St. Helena Island, and Santa Elena River is
now Port Royal Sound, but Ayllon's pilot gave the name
which the English later applied to a sound, an island, and
a parish.

THE SEA ISLANDS

St. Helena Island is one of the largest of the Sea Is- 131
lands fringing the coast of South Carolina. It is fifteen
miles in length and varies from three to five miles in
width. Located practically midway by water between 131
Charleston and Savannah, it is in the immediate vicinity of 504
a natural harbor which was described by early explorers
as one of the best on the entire Atlantic coast. Indeed,
Jean Ribaut, commander of the first French expedition to [175]
Florida, pronounced it "one of the greatest and fayrest

[p. 3]

131 584 havens of the worlde" where "without danger all the
•175 shippes in the worlde myght be harbored."[1]

The coastal region of which St. Helena Island forms
133 a part is, as Ribaut described it, "a country full of havens,
175 rivers and islandes." Deep tidal rivers cut and divide the
land into numerous islands of varying sizes, and the islands themselves are interlaced by broad tidal creeks. These facts recommended the region to the Spanish, French, and English as an ideal place for settlement, for as Robert Sandford, "Secretary and Chief Register for the Lords Proprietors of their County of Clarendon" in Carolina, said in 1666:

> the whole Country is nothing else but severall Islands made by the various intervenings of Rivers and Creeks, yett are they firme good Lands (excepting what is Marsh) nor of soe smale a seize, but to continne many of them thousands of acres of rich habitable wood land, whose very bankes are washed by River or Creek, which besides the fertility adde such a comodiousnesse for portage as few Countryes are equally happy in.[2]

133 These geographic conditions have also made for the
isolation of the region. The soil is a light sand which
134 makes road building difficult. The numerous marshes
[491] have to be crossed by causeways and the rivers by long
bridges. It requires, therefore, a considerable outlay of
[489] capital to provide modern transportation facilities for the
Sea Islands.* As a result, most of them are still without
491 bridges and good roads; they have been left to develop as
they might. Today, in going to St. Helena Island, one
[484] must cross three rivers and two islands before one at last

---

[1] Jeannette T. Connor (ed.), *Jean Ribaut, The Whole & True Discouerye of Terra Florida*, pp. 90-91.

[2] A. S. Salley, Jr. (ed.), *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 101.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

arrives at his destination, for St. Helena is the buffer between two other islands and the Atlantic. 491 484 Long bridges span these rivers now so that one may go all the way by [505] automobile, but until 1927 one could cross Beaufort River, the largest of the three, only by means of a bateau which operated as a casual ferry between Beaufort and Ladies Island. But in the days when transportation was chiefly 487 by water, these very rivers, which are now so difficult to 505 span, were one of the chief assets of the region.

THE FRANCO-SPANISH CONTEST

The Spanish were the first to claim the St. Helena 175 region both by exploration and by occupation. Spain, indeed, shows a record of one hundred and forty-two years of activity in this territory[3] before 1663 when King Charles II of England by letters patent included it in a grant to eight Lords Proprietors and delivered it to one hundred years of protested ownership before England finally gained a clear title to the region by the Treaty of 1763. In 1521 Francisco Gordillo and Pedro de Quexos, Spaniards, reconnoitered the South Atlantic seaboard, and after Quexos' expedition for Lucas Vasques de Ayllon in 1525, Santa Elena, as the Spanish came to call this section, was the most northern frontier of their Atlantic coastal region.

When Jean Ribaut explored this same region for [103] Admiral de Coligny in 1562 and built Charlesfort on what is now Parris Island,[4] he called the vicinity Port Royal, the name which the English later adopted. Ribaut's fort

---

[3] Mary Ross, "The Spanish Settlement of Santa Elena (Port Royal) in 1578," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, IX, 352.

[4] Parris Island lies across Beaufort River from St. Helena Island.

175 was the first Protestant settlement in North America and the first white settlement near St. Helena Island.[5]

In 1566 Pedro Menendez de Avilés, adelantado and captain-general of Florida and its provinces, erected the presidio San Filipe near the site of Charlesfort, which had been destroyed by Hernando Maurique de Rojas in 1564. Here Spain maintained a garrison for ten years, when the Indians burned the fort after having forced the Spanish to evacuate it.[6] In 1577, however, the Spanish erected Fort San Marcos, a larger and more substantial building, and about it there grew a town of more than sixty houses, for here Spain maintained a garrison and a mission until 1587 when Santa Elena was again abandoned.[7] The activities of the Spanish after the abandonment are not clear, but by 1655 missions had been reopened.

175 797 These missionary efforts were carried on first by Jesuits and later by Franciscans. Spain's frontier policy, unlike that of England, was based upon the mission.[8] At Santa Elena, just as at every other Spanish frontier in North and South America, missionaries, under the protection of a guard and a fort, sought to instruct the Indians in religion, agriculture, and the arts. They settled the barbarous tribes in a village adjacent to the mission-fort, instructed them in the faith, and attempted to teach them the ways of civilized life.

---

[5] For an account of Ribaut's activities at Port Royal see Connor, *Jean Ribaut.*

[6] For a description of the three forts built on Parris Island in the sixteenth century see A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Site of Charlesfort," in Connor, *Jean Ribaut*, pp. 113-124.

[7] For a comprehensive account of Spanish activities in Georgia and South Carolina, see Herbert E. Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia: A Contribution to the History of One of the Spanish Borderlands.*

(113) [8] H. E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," *American Historical Review*, XXIII, 42-61.

THE ANGLO-SPANISH CONFLICT

When Captain William Hilton in 1663 explored the Carolina coast southward from Cape Fear under the auspices of a group of Barbadians, the Anglo-Spanish contest for Santa Elena began. Upon his arrival at Parris Island, Hilton found there a Spanish garrison from San Augustín, and he immediately withdrew to avoid capture.[9] Three years later when Robert Sandford explored this region he found signs of preparations for new buildings on Parris Island and "a faire wooden Crosse of the Spaniards erecc̃on" in the Plaza of the town. Sandford considered Santa Elena, or Port Royal, as he called the territory, the most favorable site for the settlement of a colony and recommended it highly to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina who sent him on the expedition. 1750

Dr. Henry Woodward who went with Sandford remained with the cassique of Santa Elena who gave him "formall possession of the whole Country to hold as Tennant at Will of the right Hono^{ble} Lords Proprietors." But the English had to face twenty years of conflict before they could claim the possession of Santa Elena.[10] In this conflict Dr. Woodward played an important role, for his sojourn with the Indians and his subsequent capture by the Spaniards taught him not only the tongues of the natives, but the methods of the Spanish as well.[11]

---

[9] For the accounts of Hilton, Sandford, and Woodward in the Santa Elena, or Port Royal, territory, see Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, pp. 31-57, 75-107; "Shaftesbury Papers," *South Carolina Historical Society Collections*, V, 18-28, 57-82. (113)

[10] Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof of Spain's Title to Georgia*, pp. 28-44.

[11] For a biography of Woodward see Joseph W. Barnwell, "Dr. Henry Woodward, The First English Settler in South Carolina and Some of His Descendants," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, VIII, 29-41. (113)

175 The impetus for the settlement of Carolina came from Barbados where there was a clamor for more and cheaper lands. Sir John Colleton, a Barbadian planter, interested seven other English noblemen[12] in the Carolina country, and they joined him in a petition to King Charles II for a grant of the region. In 1663 the King issued a charter to these eight Lords Proprietors for all the region from 36° to 31° north latitude and two years later he extended the boundaries north to 36° 30′ and south to 29°.

Following Sandford's recommendation of Port Royal, the Proprietors chose this place as the site for the first settlement of their province.[13] In August, 1669, they sent from England three vessels under the command of Joseph West with about one hundred and fifty settlers. After many hardships and misfortunes, including the wreck of one ship at Barbados and of another at Nevis, the adventurers finally reached Port Royal in March, 1670. Here they learned that the Westoes, a war-like tribe of Indians, had scourged Santa Elena and the northward country as far as Kiawah (Ashley River). Fearful of planting in a region under such conditions, they examined the land and found on St. Helena Island "that the land was good land supplyed with many Peach trees and a competence of timber, a few figg trees and some cedar here and there and that there was a mile and a half of cleare land fitt and ready to plant."[14] The governor, William Sayle, sent, however, one of the vessels to Kiawah "to viewe that land soe much commended by the Caseeka" of that region. Those waiting at St. Helena soon received word that the land on the Ashley River was "more fit to plant in," and they at once took up anchor for that place, landing at "Albemarle Point," which was soon renamed Charles Town, the first high point on the western bank of the Ashley, where they settled.[15] A few weeks later Spain made this settlement legal by recognizing in the treaty of 1670 all English occupations then actually established.[16]

---

[12] The Earl of Clarendon; the Duke of Albemarle; William, Lord Craven; John, Lord Berkeley; Anthony, Lord Ashley (later Earl of Shaftesbury); Sir George Carteret; Sir William Berkeley.

[13] An earlier settlement had been attempted in 1665 when a company "of adventurers for Carolina," organized at Barbados, located on the Cape Fear River, calling their settlement Charles Town. The settlers abandoned this region in 1667, some going to Albemarle settlement, some to Nansemond County, and some to Boston. See Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719*, pp. 75-93; and *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 148-151, 157-159, 177-208.

While Spain conceded Charles Town to England, she did not admit that Santa Elena was English territory. Accordingly, in 1686, the Spanish wiped out the colony of Scots which Lord Cardross had established at Port Royal two years earlier.[17] Coming in three galleys, the Spaniards, aided by a force of Indians, assaulted the Scotch colony of Stuart's Town "where there was not above 25 men in health to oppose them."[18] They burned the settlers' houses and "destroyed and carried away all that they had because (as the Span^{ds} pretended) they were settled

---

[14] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 119.

[15] In 1672 another Charles Town (Charleston) was laid out on the east side of the Ashley and soon became the heart of the settlement.

[16] For the treaty see Chalmers, *A Collection of Treaties*, II, 35.

[17] Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732*, pp. 28-30; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 195-196.

[18] "Edward Randolph to the Board of Trade," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 205. For a list of settlers see *ibid.*, p. 292. For an account of the attack see Bolton, *Arredondo's Historical Proof*, pp. 41-43; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Records in the British Public Record Office Relating to South Carolina, 1685-1690*; Crane, *The Southern Frontier*, p. 31; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 216-217; "Introduction to the Report on General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in B. R. Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 350-351.

175 upon their land.” The settlers, except several who were killed in action, escaped to Charles Town. Then the Spaniards proceeded to Edisto Island where they sacked the plantations of Governor Morton and Paul Grimball, secretary of the province.

THE COMING OF THE HOME-SEEKER

The Spanish threat was effective in preventing the establishment of a colony at Port Royal, but it was not sufficient to frighten away the lone settler in search of land and timber. The provincial officials and others settled at Charles Town encouraged the movement southward. Governor John Archdale, in his *Description of Carolina*, expressed himself as being eager to see “the principal place in Carolina, call’d Port-Royal . . . seated with English and Scots in a considerable Body, because ’t is a bold Port, and also a Frontier upon the Spaniard at Augustine.”[19]

The first person daring enough to take out land on St. Helena Island seems to have been Thomas Nairne who was “imployed by the Generall Assembly of this Province [Carolina] in the quality of an Agent, and itenerary Justice Among the Indians, subject to our Government,”[20] but the warrant for his tract does not appear among the records of this period. The first warrant on record was issued in 1698 and ordered that the surveyor lay out “unto M.^{r} John Steuart a Plantation Containing One Thous.^{d} Acres of Land on y.^{e} Island of St. Helena, being a

[19] Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 292.

[20] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies*, XXIV, 632; A. S. Salley, Jr., *Journal of the Commissioners of the Indian Trade, 1710-1715*. For the subsequent history of Thomas Nairne and his death at the hands of the Yamasees, see Crane, *Southern Frontier*, *passim*.

Neck of Land formerly Inhabited by the Pocatalagoes, Lying North West of y.^{e} Lands Settled by M.^{r} Thomas Niern[e]."[21]

Other warrants[22] were issued from time to time, one in 1699, two in 1700, four in 1701, until by 1711 twenty-five warrants for 11,085 acres of land on the Island had been issued.[23] The acreage authorized by these warrants varied in size from 70 to 1,018 acres with half of the settlers taking out from 200 to 500 acres.[24] In a few instances one person obtained several warrants over a period of two or three years. For example, John Stewart, after having received a warrant for 1,000 acres in 1698, obtained in 1701 three other warrants for a total of 2,590 additional acres. In the meantime land was being taken up slowly on the adjoining islands, and in 1700 the birth of the first white child was recorded.[25] In this year it was reported "that the River of Port Royal becomes every Day better known and more inhabited."[26]

As early as 1706 the settlement around Port Royal was important enough for the provincial officials to recommend the establishment of a garrison there.[27] The earliest mention of the town of Beaufort seems to have been in

---

[21] A. S. Salley, Jr., *Warrants for Lands in South Carolina, 1692-1711*, p. 152.

[22] The issuance of a warrant for land was the preliminary step in obtaining the land. It did not necessarily follow that a person who obtained a warrant for a given tract of land also obtained the grant, or legal title, for it; nor did it mean that he actually settled there.

[23] Those who had obtained warrants by 1711 were John Stewart, John Watt, Thomas Nairne, John Cowan, John Norton, William Meggett, James Cockran, William Kimball, Daniel Dicks, Arthur Dicks, Randolph Evans, Richard Capers, William Capers, Sarah Norton, John Cowan, Jr., and Edward and Hugh Heat.

[24] Salley, *op. cit.*, *passim.*

[25] Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 366.

[26] Crane, *Southern Frontier*, p. 61n.

[27] *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIII, 286.

175 1710 when the Lords Proprietors in a meeting on December 20 agreed that a seaport town should be erected at Port Royal in Granville County to be called Beaufort Town.[28] The charter was issued January 17, 1710/11. In 1712 St. Helena's Parish was established by an act of the General Assembly. This act states that "several persons are settled to the southward of Colleton County on Port Royal Island, St. Helena Island, and several adjacent islands in Granville County.[29]

The Yamasee War suddenly interrupted the growth of settlement.[30] The Yamasees, once the friends of the English and Carolina's chief means of destroying Spanish Guale, having been ill treated by some of the traders among them, without warning opened war upon the English in May, 1715, at the Yamasee town of Pocotaligo. The inhabitants of Port Royal and adjoining islands, with a few exceptions, received word of the attack in time to escape to Charles Town in a ship which had been seized for smuggling and lay in Port Royal River. But two hundred Carolinians were slain in the revolt.

The war, however, opened the Yamasee lands to settlement, for the Indians were forced across the Savannah to San Augustín. The following spring, the General Assembly of the province, at the suggestion of the Proprietors, passed an act granting certain privileges and exemptions to those taking up land in the region which in 1707 had been set aside for the sole use of the Yamasees. The land, however, was to be opened only to actual settlers, "New Comers," from Great Britain, Ireland, or any of His Majesty's plantations in America, who were not to be permitted to convey their tracts for seven years. Each person was to be allowed 300 acres of river land and 400 acres of back land at a quit-rent of 12 pence a hundred acres and £3 purchase money for every hundred acres, to be paid within four and a half years.[31]

---

[28] *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, I, 181. For the early history of Beaufort see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort—The Original Plan and the Earliest Settlers," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 141-160.

[29] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

[30] See Crane, *Southern Frontier*, pp. 162-186; McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 531-536; "Introduction to the Report of General Oglethorpe's Expedition," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 354-355.

The settlement around Port Royal grew more rapidly after the opening of the Yamasee lands, but at best the increase in population was slow. The date of the earliest grant to a lot in Beaufort found on record is July 25, 1717, but before the middle of August more than seventy lots had been granted. Yet in 1722 the General Assembly of the province was found passing an act stating that "the fort at Beaufort is so much out of repair and the great gun carriages so rotten that the same is defenceless and of no service, whereby the inhabitants have no place of security for their families in time of alarm, which so much dispirits them that it may occasion a desertion of those frontiers."[32] In 1728/29 Thomas Lowndes of Charles Town, in a letter to the Secretary of the Board of Trade, stressed the necessity of their encouraging "a good settlement" at Port Royal for the purpose of "obstructing . . . the Spanish navigation" from that port.[33] About 1730 the population of St. Helena's Parish was estimated at seventy families,[34] and the parish at that time included the large territory bounded on the east by St. Helena Sound and Combahee River, on the north by a line from the head of Combahee River to the Savannah River, and on the south by the ocean.

---

[31] The quit-rent at which lands had been taken up previous to this act was one shilling per hundred acres. See Grant Books in the office of Secretary of State, Columbia, S. C., and Memorial Books in the office of the Historical Commission of South Carolina, Columbia.

[32] *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, 180.

[33] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, III, 11.

The growth of Beaufort may be taken as an index to the growth of St. Helena Island. Various acts passed by the General Assembly in behalf of Beaufort indicate that the town was small and had but little commercial business even to the time of the American Revolution.[35] An act of 1740 sought "to encourage the better settling and improvement of Beaufort Town," and one of 1748 mentions that "the small number of vessels trading to Beaufort Port Royal are not sufficient to encourage a pilot or pilots to furnish themselves with boats for the use of the harbour." Acts of 1752 and 1762 indicate that the town was still small and its commerce unimportant.

TYPES OF SETTLERS

The inhabitants of St. Helena's Parish, like those of Charles Town, were "persons of all sorts" coming "from the more Northern English Collonys, and the Sugar Islands, England, and Ireland."[36] They came, seasoned planters from Barbados with a knowledge of the slave regime which was well established there as early as 1643,[37] merchants from England with white indentured servants, adventuresome tradesmen who had scarcely more than enough to pay their passage money, indigent persons who sold themselves into servitude for seven years that they might have the opportunity of making their fortunes in the new world. The Proprietors at first encouraged only those to settle in Carolina who had capital with which to begin planting. The reason for this attitude is indicated in one of Lord Ashley's letters to Sir John Yeamans, written when the Ashley River colony was only a year old:

---

[34] David Humphreys, "An Account of Missionaries Sent to South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections of South Carolina*, II, 561.

[35] For a review of these acts see Henry A. M. Smith, "Beaufort," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, IX, 142-150. For the acts see *Statutes at Large of South Carolina*, III, IV, *passim*.

[36] Samuel Wilson's statement concerning Charles Town in his "Account of Carolina" found in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 167.

[37] Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 46-47.

> I am glad to heare soe many considerable men come from y^{e} Barbados for wee finde by deare experience y^{t} noe other are able to make a Plantacon but such as are in condition to stock & furnish themselves y^{e} rest serve only to fill up numbers & live upon us & therefor now we have a competent number untill we are better stocked with provisions I am not very fond of more company unless they be substantial men.[28]

Soon, however, the Proprietors were not so choice in regard to the type of person settling in Carolina and advertised the new country to rich and poor alike.

The register of St. Helena's Parish, which was begun in 1752 but which gives information of the inhabitants as early as 1710, indicates the various places from which came the settlers of St. Helena Island as well as of the entire parish. The places mentioned as the former homes of inhabitants are Bridgenorth and Ludlow in Shropshire, Bristol, Canterbury in Kent, Dorchester, Liverpool, London, and Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Barbados, and Bermuda.[29]

---

[28] *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, I, 210.

[29] Joseph W. Barnwell and Mabel L. Webber (eds.), "St. Helena's Parish Register," *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, XXIII, 8-25, 47-71, 102-151, 171-204, *passim*.

175

The register also gives some information as to the life of the settlers, for in some instances a person's occupation is recorded after his name. The register indicates that the following types of settlers were to be found among the inhabitants from 1752 to 1785: barber, boatman, carpenter, cooper, cordwainer, Indian trader, leather dresser and breeches maker, labourer, mariner, master of a piragua, merchant, overseer,[40] painter, planter,[41] pump maker, sailor, schoolmaster, ship carpenter, shipwright, shoemaker, soldier, surgeon, tailor, and weaver.

These early invaders of the southern frontier were adventurers from many sections and from many stations in life. Very few had any previous experience in wresting a livelihood from virgin land or building a home in the wilderness. Yet they were the men who laid the foundation for the prosperity which made possible one of the highest types of ante-bellum culture.

---

[40] "Overseer of Ireland" is also mentioned.

[41] "Planter of England" is also mentioned.

CHAPTER II

THE STAPLE CROPS

175

ALTHOUGH the Lords Proprietors of Carolina encouraged the settlers of their province to grow tropical and semi-tropical plants, such as indigo, cotton, and ginger,[1] these were not the products to which the people turned their chief attention. Thomas Ashe, in mentioning the occupations of the settlers in 1682, described conditions which prevailed in the province for the first half century. Of the planters he wrote:

> Their Provision which grows in the Field is chiefly Indian Corn . . . they do not much regard or encourage its [tobacco] planting, having already before them better and more profitable Designs in Action. Tarr made of the resinous Juice of the Pine (which boyl'd to a thicker Consistence is Pitch) they make great quantities yearly, transporting several Tuns to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the Caribbe Islands.[2]

NAVAL STORES AND PROVISION CROPS

The settlers on St. Helena Island followed the example of those about Charles Town and turned their attention to the manufacture of naval stores. They converted their fine live oaks into ships beams and masts; the pines, into pitch and tar. In 1712 the charter of Beaufort points to the chief occupation of the inhabitants, stating that "a port upon the River called Port Royal in Granville County" would be "the most proper place in that part of the province for ships of Great Britain to take in masts, pitch, Tar, Turpentine, & other naval stores."[3]

---

[1] McCrady, *South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 115-116.

[2] "Thomas Ashe's Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[3] Public Records of South Carolina, VI, 1-3.

[p. 17]

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 While thus exploiting the natural resources of the Island, the settlers raised only provision crops and hogs.

175 243 Although rice culture[4] was begun in South Carolina before 1690 and had become one of the staple commodities by 1724, rice was never raised to any extent on St. Helena Island. Rice culture during the colonial period was confined for the most part to the inland swamps which could be flooded from fresh-water ponds and rivers, as, for example, Combahee River. Salt water is poisonous to the rice plant,[5] and St. Helena Island has only a few small fresh-water ponds. In these few ponds some rice was raised of a different variety from the famous Madagascar rice, but the amount was necessarily small.

INDIGO CULTURE

175 249 Almost from the first settlement of South Carolina, indigo was grown in the province and at intervals a bounty was allowed for its production, but it was not until near the middle of the eighteenth century that it became an important article for exportation.[6] In it St. Helena Island found a staple which supplemented and to some extent supplanted the provision crops and the export of naval stores. As early as 1748 the dye was exported to Eng-

---

[4] See A. S. Salley, Jr., "The Introduction of Rice Culture into South Carolina," *Bulletins of the Historical Commission of South Carolina*, no. 6. For a discussion of rice culture during the ante-bellum period see Edmund Ruffin, *Report of the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina for 1843*, and R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, which appears also in *DeBow's Review*, XVI, 589-615.

[5] Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States*, p. 469.

[6] In a letter written by Elizabeth (usually abbreviated to Eliza:) Lucas in 1739 she refers to her efforts to produce indigo on her father's plantation in South Carolina. This has led some writers to assert that she first planted indigo in South Carolina and that from her experiments the great indigo industry in the province developed. The records of the province show that some indigo was produced in South Carolina before Miss Lucas was born.

175
249

land and attracted immediate attention, for Great Britain was at that time importing annually 600,000 pounds of indigo from France at the rate of about £150,000 sterling. The following year Parliament allowed a bounty of 6 pence a pound on indigo from the British colonies, and indigo culture at once grew in the favor of South Carolina planters. By 1754 the export from Charles Town had reached 216,924 pounds, and on the eve of the Revolution it had mounted to more than a million and a half pounds.[7]

Indigo had become, next to rice, the most important source of wealth in the province. Moses Lindo, a London Jew and expert indigo sorter, had done more to stimulate the growth and the excellence of the dye than any other man in South Carolina.[8] As surveyor and inspector-general of indigo for South Carolina, he taught the planters to distinguish the grades and to improve the cultivation of the plant and the manufacture of the dye. The prices were usually excellent, ranging generally from 4 to 6 shillings a pound.

[134]

A light, dry soil was best suited to indigo culture; hence it was cultivated in considerable quantities on the Sea Islands. During the colonial period both the annual and perennial plants were grown. About 1760 Governor Glen wrote that the plant most frequently used in South Carolina was the annual, the sort generally cultivated in the West Indies.[9] The perennial, however, was less trouble

---

[7] *Year Book*, City of Charleston, 1883, pp. 402-403.

[8] B. A. Elzas, *The Jews of South Carolina*, chap. III.

[9] "A Description of South Carolina," in Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 203. George Milligan, writing in 1763, quotes "an ingenious planter" as saying that there was in the province a great variety of seed, "and from every sort good indigo may be made but none answers so well in this colony as the true Guatimala." Carroll, *op. cit.*, II, 533.

175 to grow and thrived on poorer land, provided the soil was
249 dry and loose.

Planting began about the first of April. The soil, after having been well prepared, was furrowed with a drill-plough, or more often with a hoe, two inches deep, and the seed sown thinly in these trenches. A South Carolina planter estimated in 1763 that a bushel of seed would sow four acres.[10] In ten or fifteen days the young plants appeared and were immediately hoed to loosen the earth about them. When the plant was in full bloom, in June or July,[11] it was cut regardless of its height, for at that time the leaves were thick and full of juice.

With the cutting of the weed, the planter was ready to begin the process of manufacturing the dye. The plants were cut off near the ground and placed under water to ferment in a shallow vat, or steeper, as it was called. This process, which usually required some twelve hours, took the dye stuff out of the leaves. The fermenting solution was then drawn from the steeper into another vat, known as the battery, where it was violently agitated with paddles for fifteen or twenty minutes to complete the fermentation and to collect the particles of dye.

As soon as the solution acquired a blue tinge, lime water from the lime vat was carefully stirred into it until a cloudy hue appeared. The indigo water was then beaten again until granulation began and the dye stuff left to precipitate to the bottom of the vat for four or five hours. The water was drawn off and the paste which had settled in the bottom carefully strained through a horse-hair sieve to clean it and then hung up in bags for several hours to drain out the water. Afterwards the bags were put through a press to free the indigo from any remaining water and the stiff paste spread on a plank, cut into small pieces about two inches square, and placed in a drying-house so that it might have a free circulation of air without being exposed to the sun which might burn it to a cinder in a few hours. While in the drying-house, the indigo had to be turned carefully three or four times a day until it was sufficiently dried to prevent its being spoiled, and it had to be kept as much as possible from flies. When thoroughly dry, the dye was packed in barrels for market.

---

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

[11] Milligan's authority states that the blooms usually appeared four months from the time of planting.

The indigo raised in Beaufort District commanded the top price in market,[12] and it was still grown in large quantities even after the Revolution. In 1791, Mrs. Charles Capers, the wife of a St. Helena planter, stated that the planters of the Island were "wholly attentive to the Cultivation of Indigo."[13]

In some sections of the coastal region, especially in Orangeburgh District, indigo was grown throughout the ante-bellum period, and small quantities even after the Civil War. In 1828 William Elliott, of Beaufort District, wrote to the *Southern Agriculturist*, of Charleston, to encourage a more widespread growth of the plant.[14] In defense of his position, he cited the case of Donald B. Jones, of Orangeburgh, a member of the House of Representatives, who, in 1827, employed five hands in the production of cotton and five hands in the production of

[12] Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, p. 368.

[13] Mrs. Capers to Mrs. Russell, March 25, 1791. Copy of original in possession of Penn School, St. Helena Island, S. C.

[14] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828, pp. 64-66.

•175 indigo. The five who raised indigo made a net profit
249 of $225 more than the five who cultivated cotton.
In 1845 Thomas W. Glover, of Orangeburgh, wrote for the *Report on the Geology of South Carolina* a detailed statement concerning the cultivation and manufacture of indigo.[15] South Carolina indigo was then selling from 40 to 80 cents a pound, and the average production varied from twenty-nine to sixty pounds an acre.

The cultivation of indigo, however, was a precarious undertaking. The soil had to be well prepared before planting; the furrows weeded thoroughly; the caterpillars kept off the plants; the stalks cut with a special kind of hook and handled cautiously in being carried to the vats to prevent the bluish bloom from being rubbed off the leaves; the fermentation closely watched; and the introduction of lime water carefully regulated to produce the best quality of dye. After one had painstakingly watched over his crop from the preparation of the soil to the daily turning of the squares of paste in the drying house, he might even then lose his entire output by its sweating and rotting in the barrels.

Nevertheless, sea-island planters were willing to take the risk as long as Great Britain was paying a bounty, for an acre of virgin land often produced about eighty pounds
175 of good indigo. "One slave may manage Two Acres and
567 upwards," wrote Governor Glen, "and raise Provisions be-
461 sides, and have all the Winter Months to saw Lumber and
249 be otherwise employed in."[16] Thus the production of

---

[15] M. Tuomey, *Report on the Geology of South Carolina*, pp. xxiii-xxiv. A writer in *DeBow's Review* for 1850, (VIII, 495), also urges the cultivation of indigo.

[16] Carroll, *Historical Collections*, II, 204-205.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
569
461
249

indigo on St. Helena Island did not interrupt the manufacture of naval stores which was the first occupation of the settlers. After the indigo crop had been laid by, the slaves were employed in "sawing Lumber and making Hogsheads and other Staves, to supply the Sugar Colonies." Indigo culture fitted in so well with the accustomed regime of the settlers that they continued to raise it despite the uncertain returns.

INTRODUCTION OF SEA-ISLAND COTTON

175
248

The Revolution virtually cut off the market for indigo and, of course, put an end to the British bounty. The steeping vats had for a long time been considered an additional menace to health in this already unhealthy region.[17] At the same time a new staple, sea-island cotton, which offered fabulous profits, began to be raised in the tidewater region. The seed known in Georgia and South Carolina as sea-island cotton came from the Bahama Islands where it had been introduced by the Board of Trade from Anguilla, an island of the Caribbean Sea.

Several Georgia planters experimented with the seed in 1786, among whom were Thomas Spalding and Alexander Bisset whose plants although sturdy did not ripen pods. Two years later, however, Alexander Bisset exported the first bag of sea-island cotton grown in the United States.[18] To the gratified surprise of the Georgia planters, the fruit yielded a finer fiber than that grown in

---

[17] *Southern Agriculturist*, Feb., 1828. William Elliott, in his article on indigo, states that he will not admit that the steeping vats "impair the health of the country until I can find that our country has become healthier since the Indigo culture has been superseded by that of Cotton. But I readily admit, that the steeping vats must be unpleasant in those sections where the settlements are thick."

[18] Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, pp. 18, 19; *DeBow's Review*, I, 304.

175
248
the Bahamas. The plant was tall; the seed black; and the fiber, long, strong, and silky. Richard Leake, one of those who had first received the seed, at once began production on a large scale. In 1788 he wrote, "I shall raise about 5,000 pounds in the seed from about eighty acres of land and the next year I expect to plant from fifty to one hundred acres."[19]

Seed of the new product was soon obtained in South Carolina, where William Elliott, of Hilton Head Island, near Beaufort and St. Helena, seems in 1790 to have been the first to raise a successful crop.[20] He had bought five and a half bushels of seed at 14 shillings a bushel in Charleston, and he sold his crop at 10½ pence a pound. The following year John Screven, of St. Luke's Parish, planted thirty or forty acres on his plantation on May River and sold the cotton in Georgia at from 1 shilling, 2 pence to 1 shilling, 6 pence sterling a pound. The next year John Rose planted a small field on Oakatee Creek and sold the 600 pounds which he raised at 2 shillings a pound. By this time many other planters on the Sea Islands and the mainland were experimenting with the long staple cotton, and in 1793 such prominent planters as James King, of St. Paul's Parish, Colonel Edward Barnwell and Captain John Joyner, of St. Helena's Parish, and General William Moultrie, of St. John's Parish, Berkeley, were growing the cotton. The struggle between indigo and sea-island cotton had already begun. By 1798 the latter had clearly won.

---

[19] E. J. Donnell, *Chronological and Statistical History of Cotton*, p. 45; Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 152.

[20] The best account of the history of the introduction of sea-island cotton and its culture is to be found in Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*. The account in *DeBow's Review*, I, 304-315, is based upon Seabrook's history. J. A. Turner (ed.), *The Cotton Planter's Manual*, pp. 280-286, also contains some information concerning the development of the culture of sea-island cotton.

The spread of sea-island cotton planting was largely hastened by the excellent prices which the long-staple brought. The English market welcomed the new staple. In 1799 the cotton sold readily in Liverpool at 5 shillings a pound. In South Carolina, the price ranged from 9 pence to 1 shilling during the early days of the production; then it rose to 2 shillings and upwards and there remained until 1806 when the Franco-English hostilities caused the price to slump. But large fortunes had already been made. Captain James Sinkler received 3 shillings a pound for a crop of 300 acres which produced 216 pounds to the acre. Peter Gaillard, of St. John's, Berkeley, made an average of $340 a hand, and William Brisbane, of St. Paul's, was so wealthy after two years of growing sea-island cotton that he retired and sold his plantation to William Seabrook at an exorbitant price, but Seabrook paid for it in two years.

Not all, however, who planted sea-island cotton realized so great profits as these planters. The longest and silkiest fibers commanded the highest prices. For many years Kinsey Burden, Sr., of St. John's Parish, Colleton, occupied first place in the production of a fine staple, and for many years he carefully guarded the secret of his success. In 1805 he produced cotton worth 25 cents a pound more than that of his neighbors. William Elliott was among the first to guess that the secret of Burden's success lay in the quality of the seed used, and soon sea-island cotton planters everywhere were experimenting

175 248 with seed in the attempt to obtain a silky staple. In 1828 Hugh Wilson sold two bags of extra fine cotton at $2 a pound, probably the highest price ever obtained for sea-island cotton.

The growth of sea-island cotton was limited to a small area along the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, for the plant would prosper only in a light, sandy soil, known as the salt-water lands. The sea-island cotton area in the ante-bellum period was a belt of coastal land from twenty to thirty miles wide, extending from Santee River, including St. John's Parish, Berkeley, to the everglades of Florida.[21] Eutaw Springs in St. John's, Berkeley, was the extreme northern point at which the plant was cultivated.

EARLY METHOD OF CULTIVATION

The planters of the crop quickly systematized the method of cultivation so that, by 1802, the general routine in South Carolina and Georgia was about the same. The seed was planted in early spring as soon as the weather would permit. At first it was planted in separate holes, but soon came to be drilled and the plants grown at intervals of two or three feet on ridges five or six feet apart. Instead of being hoed only four times with the last hoeing about the middle of July, the crop was now hoed at more frequent intervals, all work ceasing when the plant began freely to put out fruit, which was usually early in July. The crop was harvested from September until December. The fiber was quickly damaged by bad weather and the fields, accordingly, had to be picked frequently to save the staple. The bolls opened but slightly and picking was dif-

---

[21] R. F. W. Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, reprinted in *DeBow's Review*, XVI, 593; Seabrook, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 19.

175
248

ficult so that a hand seldom averaged more than seventy-five or a hundred pounds a day, whereas on the upland cotton fields a hand often picked two hundred pounds or more in a day.

The method of culture in practice in St. Helena's Parish in 1828 has been described by William Elliott, the son of the first planter to raise a successful crop of sea-island cotton in South Carolina:

> The judicious Planter, whose plantation affords him the opportunity of choice, will select for his Cotton field, such high lands of a light brown or yellow complexion, as were covered by an original growth of hickory, laurel, red bay, interspersed with the live and white oaks, and the towering palmetto. He lays out his field into squares, of one-fourth of an acre, (105 feet,) and in the winter months, proceeds to list in the sward, with its cover of fennel or grass. On this *list*, the *bed* is subsequently raised; and, if the ground has lain fallow for some years, or if the soil be naturally close, the plough is sometimes run through the intervals, to pulverize it, and facilitate the process of bedding which is always performed by the hoe and usually commences about the middle of March. The beds are commonly five feet apart from centre to centre. The planting begins about the 20th of March, and extends to the 20th of April, and is thus performed:—A number of holes, four inches deep and twelve inches long, are cut by the hoe on the top of the bed, leaving the space of one foot between each hole. The seed which is changed every second year, is . . . carefully cleansed of such as are *coated* or *tufted with green* (that being considered *an indication of degeneracy*,) and then plentifully dropped and carefully covered. When the plant has attained its fourth or sixth leaf, if no grass should threaten it sooner, it is *hoed down*, which is effected by cutting the bed nicely down, and drawing the earth into the centre of the alley, in the shape of a small list. A fortnight before, or sooner, if the plants show the want of it, the earth is drawn to their roots, and they are slightly thinned.
>
> At every subsequent working, which after the first, is invaria-

175
248
bly a hauling or drawing up the earth to the plants, they are gradually thinned until June, when careful hands are selected to give the final thinning. This is a nice point, on which nothing like uniformity of practice prevails. In high lands, whose fertility has been impaired by frequent cropping, as many as one hundred and twenty stalks may be left in a task row, (105 feet). In newer, stronger or lower lands, where the growth of the plants is increased, the number must be proportionably diminished.

The plants are hauled, whenever the growth is checked by drought or threatened by grass, *until the middle of July*, beyond which period, it is unsafe to haul the earth to any fields but such as have been planted late in the season. . . .

We gather it as soon as possible after it has burst the pods, that it may avoid injury as well from dirt, as from too much exposure to the sun. Women and boys prove the most efficient pickers. The greatest care is used by them to separate the Cotton, all dried leaves or other substances may impair or discolour the staple. It is then spread, if wet, on a scaffold and exposed to the sun; but, if gathered in dry weather, *on the floor in the house*, to suffer whatever moisture it has imbided to escape, before it is stowed away in bulk. It is then passed once through a patent whipper, (M'Birnie's,) and sorted in the seed, at the rate of one to two hundred pounds to the hand. It is now ready for the gin. Eave's was formerly in successful use; but that, as well as the barrel gin, has been superseded by the common foot or crank gin, whose extreme simplicity of structure has given it an advantage over others more efficient, but more complicated . . . thirty pounds of clean Cotton as a day's labour, are easily turned out to each gin. It is then moted, often, but not always, on frames of wire or latticed wood, at a rate varying from fifteen to thirty pounds to the hand, and is then packed and ready for market.[22]

The preparation of the staple for market was the most tedious part of the growth of sea-island cotton. Before 1820, however, this was not considered to be the case.

[113]

[22] William Elliott, "On the Cultivation and High Prices of Sea-Island Cotton," *Southern Agriculturist*, I, 152-154.

The pickers made no effort to remove the dead leaves from the lint; the ginners allowed stained and unstained cotton to go alike into the gin; moting was accomplished by women who sat upon the floor and beat the cotton with twigs; many planters ginned, moted, and packed the cotton in the same room; and the spinner frequently on opening a bag of cotton would find, in addition to the staple, crushed seeds, potato skins, and parts of old clothing. 175 248

Sea-island cotton prepared in this manner was suited only for coarse fabrics. As the demand for the long staple became greater for making fine laces and muslins and as the high prices went to those who carefully handled their cotton, planters were forced to use more painstaking methods. The gin house, although only a simple barn, had separate rooms for the different processes. The cotton on being gathered was never exposed to the sun as formerly, but dried on a scaffold inside. Upon being dried, it was taken to the whipper which extracted the sand and imperfect fibers, and then sent to the assorters each of whom, provided with boxes for clean cotton, worked before a long table covered with wire or wooden slats, sorting the cotton according to color and fineness. From the sorters the staple went to the gins, and from there to the moting tables where women picked out the broken seeds and stained fibres. The lint was then packed into round bags of about three hundred pounds each, 1,500 pounds of seed cotton being required for a bale of this size.

Whitemarsh B. Seabrook, of Edisto Island, estimated in 1844 that fifty-four laborers[23] were required to prepare (464)

---

[23] This estimate was based upon the use of the foot-gin which was ordinarily employed in 1860 as well as in 1844. When a steam gin was used the number of ginners was reduced to six; when an Eave's improved steam gin, to three.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 the seed cotton for market as follows: one dryer; one
464 turner and one feeder of the whipper; thirty assorters,
grading fifty pounds each a day; twelve ginners, preparing
248 twenty-five pounds of lint each a day; seven moters at
forty-three pounds each; a packer and a re-inspector.
Estimating the services of each slave at 50 cents a day,
Seabrook concluded that it cost a planter $27 to gin a
bale of sea-island cotton.[24] On the average plantation it
required from fifty to sixty days of labor to cultivate and
gin a bale of fine cotton.[25]

175 In the production of naval stores, the cultivation of
indigo, and the growth of the long staple cotton, planters
464 soon learned that their most urgent need was a larger
labor supply than the sparsely settled province could
[567] afford. They turned for this supply to the African slave
market.

---

[24] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Origin, Cultivation and Uses of Cotton*, p. 31.
[25] Allston, *Essay on Sea Coast Crops*, p. 15.

CHAPTER III

THE LABORERS AND THE LAND

175
567
464

PLANTERS coming to South Carolina from Barbados, Jamaica, Antigua, and St. Kitts brought with them the idea of the plantation regime with slavery as the basis of the labor system. In 1682 Samuel Wilson, writing an account of Carolina for the Lords Proprietors as an advertisement designed to attract settlers, spoke of the necessity of slaves in the province, "without which a Planter can never do any great matter."[1]

PRE-REVOLUTIONARY SLAVE TRADE

175
567

Prior to 1730 the accessible data concerning the slave trade in South Carolina are scanty, but the enactment of numerous laws laying a duty on the importation of slaves indicates that the slave population was rapidly increasing.[2] In the years after 1730, the importation of slaves into South Carolina ranged, when the import duty was not prohibitive, from as low as 72 in 1749 to as high as 11,641 in 1773.[3] The trade was carried on by British and South Carolina merchants, and the slave vessels, largely from New England, usually came consigned to a merchant who conducted a general importing trade in Charles Town. The arrival of a cargo brought planters to the sale in great numbers. Henry Laurens, one of the leading slave importers in the province, mentioned a sale in 1755 attended

---

[1] "Account of Carolina," in Salley, *Narratives of Early Carolina*, p. 174.

[2] Elizabeth Donnan, "The Slave Trade Into South Carolina Before the Revolution," *American Historical Review*, XXXIII, 804-828.

[3] Based upon estimates made by Elizabeth Donnan, *op. cit.*, pp 807-809.

175
567

by forty or fifty planters from so great a distance as seventy miles from Charles Town.[4]

The price of slaves depended in general upon the economic conditions of the province, although other factors contributed to the general fluctuation of prices which characterized the pre-revolutionary slave market. In 1756 Laurens wrote: "The price of Slaves here while they are imported in moderate numbers is wholly influenced by the values of our Staples, Rice and Indigo, and these have been depreciated much below the prices of last Year, so have the Planters slacked in the purchase of Slaves, lowered the prices and lengthened out the Credit."[5] The price of slaves was so unstable that it seldom remained the same for many months during the year. For instance, in the spring of 1755, Negro men were bringing £260 to £270; in the fall, as high as £330. From 1751 to 1773 the price of prime men varied from £245 to £350. During a frenzied purchase in 1764, *The South-Carolina Gazette* estimated that planters had spent for new Negroes £177,870 sterling, or £1,250,090 currency.[6]

Many planters bought their slaves with cash or with produce but many more bought on credit. The terms of purchase varied as widely as the purchase price. In 1755 Laurens suggested to a correspondent that he ignore "the measure lately adopted in Charles Town, for the sale of Negroes . . . three Months Credit, to Purchasers with Interest from the Date," but instead to "deal with each

---

[4] Donnan, *op. cit.*, p. 816, citing Laurens Letter Book, July 31, 1755. In possession of South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 819 n, citing Laurens to Capt. Samuel Linnecar, May 8, 1756.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 822, citing *The South-Carolina Gazette*, June 29, 1765.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
567

Man who shall require Credit" separately.[7] Merchants encouraged payment in cash or in produce by offering a discount, sometimes as much as 5 per cent, "on all Sums paid down," although to induce a ready sale they advertised occasionally that they would give as much as twelve months credit without interest.

The favorite Negroes of the South Carolina planters were those from Gambia and the Gold Coast, although Negroes from other parts of the African coast were imported and, to encourage their acceptance, were sold at lower prices than the Gambia Negroes. Into the Charles Town market there came cargoes advertised as being from the "winward Coast of Guiney," "the Masse-Congo country," "Cape Mount on the Grain Coast"; there came Negroes from Bassa on the Winward Coast, from Bance Island, from Angola, and "Calabars from Bight," Coromantines, and "healthy young Fantees."

Although merchants, in selling new Negroes, invariably advertised the tribe or the geographic section from which the Negroes came, it is interesting to note that none of these facts was mentioned in selling seasoned slaves. It would seem that tribal differences tended to disappear as the slave became seasoned.[8]

By 1708 the number of slaves almost equalled the number of the whites in the province of South Carolina;[9]

---

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 814, citing Laurens to Smith and Clifton, May 26, 1755; to Satterthwaite, Inman, and Company, Nov. 22, 1755; to John Lewis Gervais, Feb. 28, 1772.

[8] In this connection see *ibid.*, p. 817n. The writer has noticed the same tendency in advertisements of seasoned slaves in North Carolina and Virginia as well as in South Carolina.

[9] "Sir Nathaniel Johnson's Report to the Council of Trade and Plantations," *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, XXIV, 739; also in McCrady, *South Carolina under the Proprietary Government*, pp. 477-481, 723. The estimates of

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 567 by the close of the colonial period the proportion of blacks to whites was almost two to one.[10] The closing of the African slave trade[11] in 1808 by provision of the Constitution in 1787 shut off the supply of new Negroes, but before that time most of the sea-island plantations had become well stocked with slaves. In most cases the internal slave trade and the natural increase of the plantation stock were sufficient to take care of the demand for more laborers in instances of expansion on the sea-island plantations.

THE SLAVE MARKET FOR ST. HELENA ISLAND

The planters on St. Helena Island bought their slaves at the Charleston market in common with other planters in that vicinity, for it was at Charleston that they transacted most of their business. Like other planters, too, they undoubtedly stocked their plantations with slaves from various tribes and various African localities,[12] pre-

---

Rev. Samuel Thomas, made in 1706 and based on the number of families connected with the Church of England and the Dissenter meetings in each of the six existing parishes outside of Charles Town, show 3,000 whites and 1,000 Negro Slaves. *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, V, 1131-34.

[10] Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina under the Royal Government, 1719-1776*, p. 807.

[11] In 1787 South Carolina, following the example of other states, passed an act to close the African slave trade in her ports, and by similar acts kept her ports closed for sixteen years, although it was hinted that the inhabitants on the coast and the border smuggled in slaves occasionally. In 1803 the State Legislature reopened the African slave trade, but continued to exclude West Indian Negroes and required that slaves brought in from other states have official certificates of good character.

[12] Frank Moore, (ed.), *Rebellion Record*, III, 309. The reporter for the *New York World* who accompanied the Union troops in the capture of Port Royal, November 7, 1861, said of the slaves on Hilton Head, "Every variety of negro and slave was represented. . . . Darkies of genuine congo physiques, and darkies of the genuine Uncle Tom pattern, darkies young and jubilant, darkies middle-aged, and eager, and gray-haired, solemn-looking fellows. Some appeared mystified and some intelligent."

ferring, perhaps, as did other South Carolina planters, the Gambia and Guiney Negroes. In 1791 a St. Helena planter's wife thought that the consuming interest of the Islanders was to raise more indigo to buy more slaves. The profits of the crop, she said, are "mostly expended in the purchase of Negroes, & nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure of possessing many slaves.—These singularities are inherited from their Fore-Fathers—& many follow so closely in the path thru which their Ancestors trod as to deny themselves the Comforts & conveniences of life."[13]

There are local traditions that St. Helena planters, as well as those of Edisto and other Sea Islands, received fresh supplies of African slaves at their own private wharves after the closing of the slave trade, but no documentary evidence has been found to substantiate these traditions.

The plantation records which have been preserved for the sea-island districts show that planters tended to retain their slaves, sometimes even at great financial sacrifice, selling one only because of repeated insubordination or because of economic distress. In 1867 William Jervey, of Charleston, in attempting to settle the accounts of a plantation on Ladies Island, wrote to a member of the family that "the old gentleman several times had to sell negroes to pay . . . debts."[14]

When it was necessary to sell several Negroes, the planter usually attempted to dispose of them in family groups.[15] Negroes worked better and were more satisfied to make a change of masters when the whole or a part of their families went with them. When Sir Charles Lyell visited Beaufort in 1845, he observed the general unwillingness of planters to sell to Negro traders. If planters are "forced to part with slaves," he wrote, "they usually sell one to another, and are unwilling to dispose of them to a stranger. It is reckoned, indeed, quite a disgrace to a Negro to be discarded. When the former master bids for one of his 'own people,' at a sale of property forced on by debt, the public are unwilling to bid against him."[18] This tendency to retain a slave as long as it was possible to do so often led a planter into inefficiency and oversupply.

---

[13] MS letter of Mrs. Gabriel Capers, March 25, 1791.

[14] MS in Sarah W. Ellis Papers, April 20, 1867.

[15] MS, A. F. Gregorie Account Book. A deed of sale dated Jan. 9, 1840, shows that A. F. Gregorie, of Greenwood Plantation, "Delivered to Mr J. E. Moore Mitchell the following Twenty five Negroes viz—

EXTENT OF SLAVEHOLDING

The average number of slaves per owner for Beaufort District in 1790 was twenty-four; in 1860, thirty. The average for the district in 1860 was twice as great as the average for the state as a whole. The following table shows the size of slaveholdings in the district in 1790 and in 1860:

Jan. 13th 1840
Sambo & Jenny his wife and their children
Ned
Tyrah
Rhynah
Pilot
Grace
Penny & her son Isaac & Jack
Island George & Bynah his wife
William & Nancy his Sister and her child Bess
Honor Elizabeths Maid
Charles and his Wife Hagar and their son Allen
Robert & his wife Caty & their children Peter
Dunbee, and Caty's sister Dinah & her child
Bess brought back to stay with her Grand Mother Lucy."

---

[18] Sir Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to the United States*, I, 233.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
567

SIZE OF SLAVEHOLDINGS IN BEAUFORT DISTRICT[31]

Number of Slaves	Slaveowners			
	Number		Per Cent	
	1790	1860	1790	1860
1 slave	73	78	12.5	7.3
2 and under 5	88	173	15.1	16.1
5 and under 10	95	204	16.2	19.0
10 and under 20	86	188	14.7	17.6
20 and under 50	150	216	25.6	20.2
50 and under 100	69	142	11.8	13.2
100 and under 200	20	51	3.4	4.8
200 and under 300	3	13	0.5	1.3
300 and under 500	0	4	0.0	0.4
500 and under 1,000	1	1	0.2	0.1
Total	585	1,070	100.0	100.0

Although the number of slaveholders in 1860 had increased 83.9 per cent over that of 1790, the distribution in the two periods, according to the size of holdings, did not vary appreciably. In 1790 some 58.5 per cent of the slaveowners had less than twenty slaves and in 1860 only 60 per cent had less than that number, a difference of less than two per cent. In 1790 those owning more than one hundred slaves were 4.1 per cent of the total, while in 1860 they were 6.6 per cent, a difference of 2.5 per cent. The only significant change in the distribution of the size of holdings occurred in the class possessing from twenty to fifty slaves. In 1790 this group was a fourth of the total, but in 1860 it had been reduced to a fifth.

While the general average for the district in 1860 would place every owner in the rank of a planter, it is significant that three-fifths of the slaveholders in the district owned less than twenty slaves. With less than this number a man engaged in the cultivation of sea-island [248

---

[31] *Agricultural Census, 1860*, p. 237; *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States, 1790: State of South Carolina*, pp. 10-13.

175 567 (248) cotton, the staple crop in 1860, could not hope to engage in large scale production. Only 19.8 per cent owned more than fifty slaves and only one planter owned more than five hundred. The conclusion must be, therefore, that the majority of those engaged in agriculture in this district, one of the most densely populated slave counties in the entire South, belonged to the small planter class.

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of slaves owned by St. Helena planters at any given time.[18] The first census of the United States shows that only four men in Beaufort District, none of whom lived on St. Helena Island, owned more than two hundred slaves in 1790. Frederick Witsell had 607; Thomas Heyward, 265; General Stephen Bull, 233; and John Rutledge (who lived in Charleston), 217. Of those living on St. Helena, the plantation of William Fripp with 153 slaves had the largest number; that of John Jenkins with 136 slaves, the next largest. The other holdings were considerably less. Thomas Chaplin had 65 slaves; William Chaplin, 50; John Chaplin, 30; Paul Fripp, 37; Thomas Fripp, 33; John Fripp, 38; Charles Capers, 45; William Capers, 15; John Cowen, 13; Peter Perry, 45; George Pope, 39.

Early in 1862 Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Treasury Department, estimated that there was an average of forty slaves to a plantation on St.

---

[18] The courthouse at Gillisonville, the seat of Beaufort District, was destroyed by Sherman's Army in 1864. Later the county seat was changed to Beaufort, and in 1883 the courthouse there was destroyed by fire. Practically all of the ante-bellum county records have, therefore, been destroyed. The MS, "Return of Tax Collected by John M. Baker in the Parish of St. Helena for the Year Commencing Oct. 1, 1860" (in possession of William Elliott, Columbia, S. C.), does not contain a list of slaves. This MS is a duplicate of the original which Congressman William Elliott said in a written statement that he deposited in the Court of Claims. A search through some of the files of the Court has failed to reveal the original.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

Helena. With the blockade of the coast and the capture 175
of St. Helena Island on November 7, 1861, the planters 567
on the Island left in great haste, in some cases not having time to take even a house servant along. After the hasty departure of their masters, the slaves on Ladies and St. Helena islands quite generally remained on their respective plantations so that Mr. Pierce's estimate included in his "Report to the Secretary of Treasury" of February 3, 1863,[19] closely approximates the number of slaves on the St. Helena plantations during the latter part of the plantation regime.

Mr. Pierce found 260 slaves at Coffin's Point, the plantation of Thomas Aston Coffin, who was generally conceded to have the best managed and the most prosperous plantation on St. Helena. On Dr. William J. Jenkins' plantation he found 130 slaves; on the Eustis plantation on Ladies Island, 120; on the others from 38 to 80 slaves.[20] On the "best peopled" plantations he found an average of eighty-one slaves but a general average, on all plantations, of about fifty-two. This estimate is much higher than the size of slaveholdings of the majority of planters in Beaufort District, for, as the foregoing table indicates, 60 per cent of the owners in the district possessed less than twenty slaves in 1860.

The price of slaves increased with the advancing years of the ante-bellum period until in 1859 the average price of prime field hands reached about $1,900.[21] In some instances prime men sold for almost three thousand dollars.

---

[19] *Rebellion Record*, I, 302-315.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 303.

[21] Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 374. For the advance in prices and an explanation of the causes see *ibid.*, pp. 359-401.

175
567
The prices in Beaufort District, and, therefore, on St. Helena Island, followed closely the prices at Charleston, which were uniformly above the Virginia market but below that of New Orleans. The following table represents the investment in slaves of one planter in Beaufort District about 1860, James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation. The prices may be taken as an average of prices for the district, and the proportion of prime hands, those valued at more than $1,000, to the entire holding as the average for the district.

VALUE OF SLAVES ON GREENWOOD PLANTATION IN 1860[22]

Value in dollars	Number	Per Cent
None	15	10.4
1-100	1	0.7
100-200	9	6.3
200-300	6	4.2
300-400	12	8.3
400-500	16	11.1
500-600	4	2.8
600-700	10	6.9
700-800	12	8.3
800-900	26	18.0
900-1,000	7	4.9
1,000-2,000	25	17.4
2,000	1	0.7
Total	144	100.0

Mr. Gregorie estimated the market value of his 144 slaves in 1860 to be $85,450. The average value of all his slaves was $593.40,[23] but the average price of the saleable slaves was $662.40. Fifty per cent of them would bring on the market something more than seven hundred dollars; while ten per cent had no market value whatever and were merely a liability to the owner. All slaves listed as worth more than a thousand dollars were men. Besides Solomon whose value was estimated at $2,000, there were Andrew at $1,500; Dublin, Israel, Sampson, Ben, Solomon, and Cato, at $1,200; John Cox, Phil, Toney, Quamina, and Buff, at $1,100; and John, Chester, Joseph, Jupiter, Paris, Frank, Pompey, Daniel, Hector, Richard, Jacob, Sam, and Abraham, at an even $1,000. Prime women who could go to the field and turn out as much work as a man were most often listed at $800, although a few, Beck, Sally, and Nanny, would bring $900. Thus, out of 144 slaves, the Greenwood plantation had about fifty-nine prime hands in 1860. 175 567

---

[22] MS in Gregorie Papers.

[114]

[23] Gregorie's estimate is probably too high. James Hamilton Couper, of Hopeton plantation, Glynn County, Ga., estimated the average price of the more than five hundred slaves on the plantation under his management to be $450.

SIZE OF ST. HELENA PLANTATIONS

The exact number of plantations on St. Helena Island at the close of the plantation regime is difficult to determine, because the planters themselves were not always consistent in designating the same tracts as separate plantations. It sometimes happened, as in the cases of Captain John Fripp and Dr. William J. Jenkins, that a planter owned several tracts at various places on the Island which he operated as distinct plantations, but in paying his taxes he grouped all of his tracts as one large holding. The number of separate tracts was about fifty-four[24] as far as can be determined by statements made by the owners themselves, or their heirs, some thirty years after the close of the plantation regime; and the number of landholders, 000

---

[24] Petitions filed in the Court of Claims under the Compensation Act of 1891. Edward L. Pierce, special agent for the United States Government, listed the number of plantations at fifty. *Rebellion Record*, I, 303. This number includes Morgan, Coosaw, Datha, Wassaw, Pine, and Polowana islands, small islands separated from St. Helena Island by creeks.

248 From then until August a few hands put in a half acre or
464 less a day, planting in all sixteen acres of potatoes. Work
567 on the cotton crop stopped about the middle of July.
Fripp finished planting about the first of September when he had two acres of potato slips put in for seed and three-fourths of an acre of turnip seed sown.

By November 29 he had gathered and finished "breaking in" the corn crop, having made 650 bushels, less than 12 bushels to the acre. By December 9 he had finished digging potatoes, having made a poor crop, and four days later he had gathered all the cotton. On December 13 the hands began processing the cotton and did not finish ginning the crop of thirty-five bales until February 12, just in time to begin listing the soil in preparation for drilling in the cotton seed a few weeks later. During the slack periods, the hands had been engaged in digging and hauling marsh mud to manure the fields, cutting marsh grass for fodder and also for fertilizer, cutting and sawing wood, and ditching fields.[2]

248 St. Helena Island planters, as a rule, obtained the
(412) simplest of farm implements for their laborers. Most of
the work in cultivating sea-island cotton was done with the
175 hoe. In 1822 there was not a plough or scythe on Edisto,
248 one of the best cultivated of the Sea Islands. The largest
407 plantations had only two or three carts; the use of oxen
493 was unknown.[3] By 1844 nearly every plantation on the island had a cart and mule or yoke of oxen to every six taskable hands. At the close of the ante-bellum period, however, John F. Townsend was the only planter who

---

[2] MS, John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

[3] Seabrook, *Memoir on the Cultivation of Cotton*, p. 25.

175 248 407 493 C492

used plows to any extent.[4] Only a few planters on St. Helena Island, such as Thomas A. Coffin and Dr. W. J. Jenkins, used plows, and when a plow was used it was more often drawn by an ox than a mule.[5]

175

In 1856 when John E. Fripp, of St. Helena Island, bought the Chechessee Bluff plantation of about 560 acres on Oakatee Creek, he equipped it as follows: a saddle, or sulkey, horse and a pair of carriage horses; four mules; eighty-eight stock cattle; six oxen; a large flat boat and two small ones; four good and three "indifferent" plows; three mule or horse carts, two ox carts, one good ox wagon, one ox wagon needing repairs, one mule, or ox, wagon needing a body, one carriage and one sulkey; four sets of cart harness; plow line chains; collars; one small corn mill, a small sugar mill and "fixings"; spades, axes, and hoes.[6]

248

Although various gins for extracting the seed from sea-island cotton were invented, the only kind used to any extent on St. Helena Island at the close of the ante-bellum period was the old foot-gin, the kind first invented for that purpose. Planters complained that the Negroes quickly broke the more complicated machines. The *Cotton Planter's Manual* described the foot-gins as follows:

248 407

> These simple machines are 3½ feet high, 2 feet long, and 1 wide, with an iron fly-wheel like that of a "box corn-sheller," upon each side, working a pair of wooden rollers, made of hard oak, about ten inches long and nearly an inch in diameter, held together by screws. . . . These rollers wear out, and have to be replaced by new ones every day. . . . The rollers are moved by the foot, like

---

[4] Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

[5] See MS, Port Royal Correspondence. In archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

[6] John E. Fripp, Bluff Plantation Book.

> 248 407 a small turning lathe, the operator standing at one end of the gin, feeding the cotton very slowly through the rollers, leaving the smooth black seeds behind. . . . Twenty or thirty of these little machines stand in one room; and, strange to say, none of those who have attempted to propel them by other power have succeeded. One very intelligent gentleman told me that he had spent $5,000 in trying experiments in machinery to gin this kind of cotton.[7]

BEGINNING OF EXPERIMENTAL AGRICULTURE

248 Although sea-island cotton in the early days of its introduction was one of the most profitable crops ever raised in the South, the increase of its production and the varying fineness of the fiber caused a wide fluctuation in the price. Thus while some planters ~~realized cons~~iderable profits, ~~others were hard put~~ to make expenses. As early as 1826 the most progressive planters in nearly every parish which grew "sea-islands" began to inquire into the causes of this condition. They organized agricultural societies[8] in the attempt to improve the general methods of culture and to standardize the prices; they subscribed to agricultural magazines; they wrote articles; they sent out questionnaires.

● [175] In 1828 William Elliott, of St. Helena's Parish, writing in the *Southern Agriculturist*, expressed the general sentiment of sea-island planters on this important subject. He said:

> I shall turn to the consideration of a question, which it is of a paramount importance that a Sea-Island Planter should examine and

---

[7] Turner, *Cotton Planter's Manual*, p. 135.

[8] The St. Helena Agricultural Society was organized prior to February, 1843. *The Southern Agriculturist* of that date contains a letter from Daniel Jenkins, the secretary, on the unsuccessful experiment of some St. Helena planters in packing sea-island cotton in square bales.

CHAPTER VIII

"CONTRABAND OF WAR"

THE CAPTURE OF PORT ROYAL

175 For three days the Federal fleet had been collecting in Confederate waters, until by the afternoon of November 6, 1861, Confederate scouts were able to count forty-five steamers and gunboats outside Port Royal Sound. Only the most timorous were fearful of an attack on the two forts guarding the entrance to the Sound, Fort Beauregard at Bay Point on Eddings' Island and Fort Walker upon Hilton Head, and the consequent capture of Beaufort. The planters themselves could not conceive of any military strategy which would make the possession of Beaufort important to the enemy. It was Charleston's scalp which the fleet had come to take and the display outside Port Royal was a subterfuge. So they remained on their plantations with their families quietly waiting for the enemy to sail on.

The Confederate officers were not to be taken by surprise, although they were fervently hoping that Beaufort with its inadequate defense was to be spared. They asked for reinforcements at once and began preparations for an attack. At dawn on the morning of November 7 the "armada," led by the sixty-gun flagship of Captain DuPont, advanced in battle array upon the two forts with their feeble batteries, twenty guns at Fort Walker and nineteen at her sister fort across the Sound. At 9:25 o'clock a nine-inch gun from one of the forts opened fire. Soon firing was general upon land and water, but the advancing fleet came on safely beyond the range of the Con-

[p. 154]

federate barrage. Passing both batteries, they turned and delivered, in their changing rounds, a terrific shower of shot and shell in flank and front. By 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the Confederate forces commenced retreating to Ferry Point, leaving the Sea Islands about Port Royal Sound in the possession of the Federal Army during the remainder of the war.[1]

When word came that Beaufort was actually to be attacked, the confusion on the plantations was overwhelming. Hastily gathering together what clothes they could, wives prepared themselves and their children for the flight to the main, while husbands got ready the flats and boats for the trip. They took with them only the house servants most urgently needed in the care of the family, the nurses and cooks, instructing the field hands to remain at work under the direction of the drivers until their return. In their flight they had little time or space for family heirlooms or valuables. They left their houses and their fields just as they were. By afternoon when the Federal troops took possession of the district, not a white person of Confederate sympathies could be found in Beaufort or on the plantations.[2]

---

[1] See "The Capture of Port Royal, S. C.," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, pp. 192-197; *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 186-193.

[2] A few weeks later a general outcry arose in Charleston over this unpremeditated flight. Women and politicians alike declared that the planters should at least have taken time to destroy the crops which were evidently going to be of such benefit to the enemy. To this attack, a St. Helena planter replied in the *Charleston Daily Courier*, Dec. 2, 1861:

"Our sacrifices already have exemplified our patriotic devotion, and our failure to have entailed greater, by the destruction of our several crops, resulted in our having been steadily employed in providing ways and means for the retreat of the forces at Bay Point . . . it is . . . true that the successful conduct of that retreat was entirely due to the exertions of the little band of men composing the St. Helena Mounted Riflemen, Captain Fripp [in command]. . . .

175 General W. T. Sherman, in command of the "Expeditionary Corps" arriving at Port Royal, as this region was now to be called, on the fleet in command of Captain Du-Pont, described in two official reports conditions as he found them after the battle:

> The effect of this victory is startling. Every white inhabitant has left the island. The wealthy islands of Saint Helena, Ladies, and most of Port Royal are abandoned by the whites, and the beautiful estates of the planters, with all their immense property, left to the pillage of hordes of apparently disaffected blacks.
>
> * * *
>
> The surrounding country evacuated by the whites, as described in my last, has upon it an abundance of valuable property, including ungathered crops and cotton mostly gathered. I have directed all the means of transportation, such as boats, scows, wagons, &c., to be collected for the use of the Army; but in regard to other private property, such as can be made of no injury to us in the operations of the enemy, I have directed not to be interfered with. This, however, is a difficult matter, and there exists too great a propensity to rob and pillage the houses and plantations left in charge only of the blacks.[3]

175
567 Later Hazard Stevens who also witnessed as an officer of the Federal Army the capture of Port Royal attributed much of the looting to the Negroes whom he de-

---

"The facts are briefly these. So soon as it was understood by the St. Helena Company that a retreat of our forces from Bay Point might become necessary, every hand was employed and every individual busied in gathering together the flats and boats from every quarter of the Island. This duty was rendered doubly arduous by the unwillingness displayed by some of the negroes, who shrunk from executing the order from fear, and in many instances secreted themselves at the appointed time. So excited and disorganized had they become from fear inspired by the terrible cannonading only three miles distant from their point of rendezvous, that it was found necessary to have the flats, as they were manned, each superintended by a member of our little company, who were instructed to make an example of the first rebellious negro who hesitated to row."

[3] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, pp. 6, 188.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
567

scribed as being in "the densest ignorance, some of them the blackest human beings ever seen, and others the most bestial in appearance." "These ignorant and benighted creatures flocked into Beaufort on the hegira of the whites," wrote Stevens, "and held high carnival in the deserted mansions, smashing doors, mirrors, and furniture, and appropriating all that took their fancy. After this loot, a common sight was a black wench dressed in silks, or white lace curtains, or a stalwart black field hand resplendent in a complete suit of gaudy carpeting just torn from the floor. After this sack, they remained at home upon the plantations, and reveled in unwonted idleness and luxury, feasting upon the corn, cattle, and turkeys of their fugitive masters."[4]

The Negroes were inclined to hold aloof from the invading army. They had been told by their masters that the enemy was likely to seize them and carry them off to Cuba. They, who were accustomed to look upon persons even from neighboring islands as "foreigners," were startled by the presence of so many white persons. The officers had expected to put the Negroes to work at once in getting ready the new camps, after the example of General Butler, who had earlier captured Hampton Roads and solved his labor problem and the status of the Negro simultaneously by declaring the slaves contraband of war. But, after the army had been at Port Royal more than a month, the Negroes still were suspicious. A great many would come in to watch the operations of the white soldiers, bringing with them wives and children, but when work was suggested most of them would again take to the woods and the swamps, often leaving their families to be fed by the army.[8] By February, 1862, however, 600 Negroes had collected at the Federal camp at Hilton Head.

---

[4] Stevens, *Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, pp. 354, 355.

The Negroes on the islands more remote from Beaufort and Hilton Head quite generally remained on their respective plantations under the direction of the drivers who still held the keys to the corn-houses. With the same sense of responsibility that they felt before their masters fled, they dealt out rations and directed the work of the field hands. In one instance a Federal agent was called upon to settle a dispute between a driver and a field hand, as being the only white man to whom an appeal might be made. The driver was refusing the hand his peck of corn because he had been absent visiting his wife on a neighboring plantation when the corn was gathered, the work having been done after "gun shoot," as the Negroes termed the battle of Port Royal. The hand protested that he had helped to plant and hoe the corn and had been absent when it was gathered only because of sickness. Upon this evidence the agent advised the driver to deal out the peck, and the driver promptly did so.

The St. Helena Negroes seem to have had little part in the looting of their masters' houses. They were accustomed to the absence of their owners and to seeing the "big house" closed many months during the year. They could not believe, as the soldiers told them, that their masters were gone for good. After a while they did begin to take a few simple articles such as sugar and soap,[9] and later, when they saw the soldiers entering the houses, they also took pieces of furniture, but by far the greater portion of valuables was taken by the soldiers and Government agents. 175 567

---

[8] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 202.

[9] Their attitude is in striking contrast to that of the Combahee River Negroes who usually to a man went off with the Federal Army when a raid was made up the River. On one such occasion, seventy-three Negroes on the plantation where

THE PROBLEM OF THE CONQUERING ARMY

When the Federal Army captured Port Royal, it found that it had also taken possession of some ten thousand Negroes who might be “contraband of war,” but whose status was doubtful, nevertheless. They could not be treated as northern laborers, put to work at the camps, and then ignored. It was even possible that the Army might in the last extremity have to feed and clothe them. But in the meantime there were valuable provisions for the Army on the plantations and valuable crops in the fields which could not be left to the uncertain course of the Negroes. 175 567 657

One of the first orders to the troops was to collect boats and mules for transportation service and corn and cattle for the commissary. Edward L. Pierce later reported that the Army had taken nearly all the corn from Ladies Island, hoping that the surplus on St. Helena would be sufficient to feed the Negroes of both islands, and from all the plantations it had taken the workable mules and horses and many of the oxen, which they slaughtered for beef, sometimes killing as many as “fifty or more head on a plantation.”[7]

---

two Federal boats anchored aided in the destruction of their own and three neighboring plantations. They set fire to the “big house,” containing a library of 3,500 volumes, to the steam threshing mill, rice barn, corn house, kitchen, storeroom, mule stable, and three Negro houses. They put on board 6,000 bushels of rice from the plantation barn and then, with their clothing tied in bundles and with their chickens and pigs squealing a protest, climbed on the vessels to the last woman and child. See *Charleston Mercury*, June 19, 1863.

[7] Pierce, “Second Report,” *Rebellion Records*, sup., I, p. 319.

175
569
657

To the Treasury Department, the War Department turned over the task of collecting and selling the cotton. For this purpose, Secretary Chase hastily appointed certain men whom he called cotton agents to direct the work of the Negroes. William H. Reynolds, lieutenant colonel of the First Regiment of Rhode Island Artillery, was appointed resident agent and placed in charge of the cotton agents. His motives appear to have been superior to those of many who worked under him. In making a report on the progress of work to Secretary Chase the first of the year he wrote:

> I find on most of the Plantations corn, and Sweet Potatoes, in sufficient quantities to support the Negroes.
>
> I have made arrangements to furnish them with salt, molasses & other small stores in moderate quantities deducting the cost of these articles from the amt due them for labor.
>
> . . . I find it is impossible to hire the Negroes by the day, on many of the Plantations, & have authorized my clerks to allow them a dollar for every four hundred pounds of stone cotton which they deliver at the steamboat landing, paying them partly in money & the bal in Clothing & Provisions—[8]

Edward L. Pierce, a special agent for the Treasury Department, who arrived at Port Royal a few weeks after the cotton agents, found some of them practicing "a reign of terror over the Negroes." One of them, a carpenter from New York City, had the "profoundest contempt" for his laborers.[9] Others also wrote of the dubious practices of the cotton agents. "Mr. Whiting has not been a Government agent for two months," Miss Towne wrote indignantly in 1862, "and yet he lives in Government

---

[8] Port Royal Correspondence. Wm. H. Reynolds to S. P. Chase, Jan. 1, 1862.

[9] *Ibid.*, Edward L. Pierce to S. P. Chase, March 30, 1862.

property, making the negroes work without pay for him 175
and living upon 'the fat of the lamb,'—selling too, the 567
sugar, etc., at rates most wicked, such as brown sugar, 657
twenty-five cents a pound; using Government horses and carriages, furniture, corn, garden vegetables, etc. It is too bad. The cotton agents, many of them, are doing this."[10]

While the cotton agents promised wages to the laborers, they were slow to pay, for the Department expected the fund arising from the sale of cotton to take care of the expense of picking it. The difficulty in getting the Negroes to work, together with the difficulty in getting the cotton ginned and to the New York market, added to the delay. The agents had expected to bale the cotton on the plantations, but the Negroes had quite generally broken up the gins so that most of it had to be sent to New York for this purpose. Consequently, it was April, 1862, before the Negroes received any pay for their labor, and then some of it was in orders on the agents' stores where prices were high. Consequently, the Government was facing general discontent and uneasiness among the Negroes only a few months after having taken them under its protection.

At the time that the Treasury Department was assigned the task of marketing the cotton, it was also given jurisdiction over the operation of the plantations and, consequently, the general welfare of the laborers on them. As early as January 15, 1862, General Sherman had applied to headquarters for authority to put into operation

---

[10] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 55, 61. See also pp. 16, 17, 66, 67.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
567
657

a plan for the superintendence of agriculture and education within his department. He wrote to the adjutant-general on this date:

> For the future maintenance of these people some system must be established, and one which will permit them to sustain themselves; but before they can be left entirely to their own government they must be trained and instructed into a knowledge of personal responsibility—which will be a matter of time. I have, therefore, the honor to recommend that suitable instructors be sent to them, to teach them all the necessary rudiments of civilization and secondly, and in the meantime, that agents, properly qualified, be employed and sent here to take charge of plantations and superintend the work of the blacks until they are sufficiently enlightened to think and provide for themselves. They should receive wages, and the profits of the plantations, after all expenses are paid, should go to the Government. I can see no other way to lay a groundwork for future usefulness with this unfortunate class of people.[11]

The next month General Sherman issued an order appealing to the benevolent people of the land "in behalf of the helpless blacks of South Carolina within the limits of his command."[12]

When the Treasury assumed the responsibility of the Negro, Secretary Chase had in mind some such plan as Sherman had already suggested. It occurred to Chase that here was an opportunity to test the ability of the Negro to exercise freedom in case it were eventually given him. Under a fostering benevolence, the Negro was to be given the chance of revealing his capabilities. Out of the battle of Port Royal there gradually arose in the minds of those in the North the scheme for a great social experi-

[11] *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. VI, serial no. 6, p. 218.
[12] *House Ex. Doc. No. 142*, 41st Cong. 2d Sess.

ment which would form some basis for a decision concerning the status which the Negro should be given after the war. 175 567 657

To put some such scheme in operation the Department chose Edward L. Pierce, a young abolitionist of Boston who had studied in Chase's law office. He had been at Hampton, Virginia, and after he was mustered out of military service in July, 1861, went to Washington where he had occasion to relate some of his recent experiences with the Negroes to Secretary Chase. This fact together with their personal friendship was perhaps responsible for the Secretary's sending Pierce, then practicing law in Boston, a wire December 21, 1861: "If you incline to visit Beaufort in connection with contrabands and cotton, come to Washington at once."[13] On the twenty-fifth Pierce conferred with Chase and, on January 13, 1862, left New York City for Beaufort to make an investigation of social conditions among the Negroes under the temporary appointment as special agent for the Treasury Department.

Pierce found the "contrabands" discontented with the treatment they had received at the hands of the cotton agents and the Army. They were suspicious and reticent. When asked if they desired to be free, they would often answer, "De vite man do w'at he pleases wit' us. We yunnah niggers now, Massa."[14] But, concluded Pierce, "in spite of their condition, reputed to be worse here than in many other parts of the rebellious region, there are such features in their life and character, that the opportunity is now offered to us to make of them, partially in

---

[13] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 54.

[14] Pierce, "Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 308.

175 567 657 this generation, and fully in the next, a happy, industrious law-abiding, free and Christian people, if we have but the courage and patience to accept it.”[15] Whereupon he outlined a plan to the Secretary by which he thought this ideal might be realized.

He was much opposed to the plan of leasing the plantations with the people upon them to the highest bidder, as the cotton agents had recommended. Instead, he would propose a system of superintendents of plantations whereby certain men, carefully chosen for the position, should be appointed to manage the cultivation of the plantations, their chief object being “to promote the moral and intellectual culture of the wards” and “to prepare them for useful and worthy citizenship.” The superintendents, who were to be selected “as carefully as one would choose a guardian for his children,” were to have complete authority on their respective plantations subject only to a director-general. The superintendents were to be compensated by a good salary, say $1,000, and the laborers by a standard wage graduated by the wants of the laborers and the ability of the Government to pay, this ability to be determined by the profits arising from the cultivation of the plantations. He thought, however, that the Government should be able to allow rations and 40 cents a day.

As a part of the plan, Pierce advised the Government to send missionaries “to address the religious element of a race so emotional in their nature” and teachers to instruct the laborers in reading, writing, and arithmetic. For the salaries of these persons, Pierce thought that the Government could rely upon private benevolence.[16] 175 567 657

---

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

While Pierce's "Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," of February 3, 1862, which at once received wide publication, was for the most part enthusiastically received in the North, there were some who thought that he went too far in presuming upon the Negro's ultimate citizenship. Even his personal friends in Congress refused to support the plan, and President Lincoln did not wish to be troubled with "such details"; for, so Pierce thought, he approached the great question of the status of the Negro "slowly and reluctantly."[17] Chase seems to have been well pleased with the report and at once put it in operation.[18] In looking about for the proper person to put this difficult and important experiment into effect, it was natural that the Secretary should choose the father of the plan.

Although the Department had adopted the plan of 175 superintendents, it had no funds with which to pay them. 657 At this critical stage the Educational Commission, organized in Boston February 7, 1862, and the Freedman's Relief Association, organized in New York on the twentieth of the same month, volunteered to pay both superintend-

---

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 311, 312.

[17] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 65.

[18] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. The authority by which the Treasury Department assumed the responsibilities outlined in the report was based upon the Act of July 13, 1861, by which the President was authorized to permit commercial intercourse with any part of the country in a state of insurrection under such rules and regulations as might be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. The act authorized the Secretary to appoint the officers needed to carry into effect such permits, rules, and regulations. President Lincoln sanctioned the enterprise in a note to Pierce, February 15, 1862, and the War Department approved the plans in an order to General Sherman which he made a part of General Orders, No. 17.

175 659 ents and teachers. These two societies, together with the Port Royal Relief Committee, organized in Philadelphia, March 3, paid all salaries for four months, when the Treasury Department, having derived $200,000 from the sale of confiscated cotton, assumed payment of superintendents' salaries on July 1, still leaving the salaries of the teachers, however, to the benevolent societies. In the meantime other societies for the relief of the freedmen had been organized in the North and West and even in Great Britain.[19]

THE SOCIAL EXPERIMENT

On the morning of March 3, 1862, Pierce sailed from New York with the first delegation of superintendents and teachers, forty-one men and twelve women, each approved either by Pierce or Secretary Chase, each with a certificate of appointment from the Department. On the ninth they arrived at Beaufort. A few returned North immediately after their arrival, while still others came to take their places or to increase the number in the field. The largest number duly commissioned and in actual service did not exceed at any time seventy men and sixteen women.[20]

Many of those who came had little knowledge of the Negro and none whatever of slave conditions, but they were, for the most part, young, enthusiastic, and well educated. Youths just out of Harvard and Yale, divinity students fresh from the seminary, medical students and doctors with years of experience, they came, risking their

---

(872) [19] Friends of the freedmen in England maintained a school on St. Helena Island from 1862 to 1869. See J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South Relating to Freedmen.*

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record,* sup. I, p. 315.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

lives in this region of malaria and typhoid, to train the 175
Negro for citizenship.[21] While some refused to accept 657
any remuneration, others served at from $30 to $50 a month, only one receiving as high as $100, a doctor on North Edisto. All, however, took their quarters in the deserted houses of the planters and received soldiers' rations from the Government.

In two weeks after their arrival each superintendent 175
and teacher had been assigned a post and was at work, 657
but his task was overwhelming. Stirred up by the care- 567
less and conflicting talk of the soldiers, victimized by the 464
cotton agents, the Negroes were unwilling pupils. "We found them a herd of suspicious savages," wrote Edward

---

[21] MS in Treasury Department on superintendents and teachers for Port Royal. Those first appointed to plantations on St. Helena Island were as follows: Edward W. Hooper, of Boston, 22 years old, graduate of Harvard, served without compensation, teacher and superintendent at Pope's plantation; Edward S. Philbrick, of Brookline, Mass., 34 years old, railroad engineer and architect, received no compensation, superintendent at Coffin's Point; William C. Gannett, of Boston, 22 years old, divinity student, no compensation the first month, superintendent and teacher with Philbrick at Coffin's Point; James H. Palmer, of Southampton, N. H., 25 years old, medical student, assistant superintendent and teacher at Coffin's Frogmore plantation, $30 a month; David F. Thorpe, of Providence, R. I., student at Brown University, 25 years old, superintendent at Oliver Fripp's plantation, $40 a month; Dr. Adoniram Judson Wakefield, of Boston, 38 years old, physician, located on Thomas B. Fripp's plantation, medical attendant of Negroes in that section, $50 a month; T. Edwin Ruggles, of Milton, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, farmer, superintendent at Rev. Richard Fuller's plantation, $50 a month; Richard Soule, Sr., 49 years old, civil engineer and teacher, superintendent at Coffin's Frogmore, $50 a month; Dr. Charles H. Brown, of Boston, 45 years old, physician, medical attendant for Negroes in vicinity of Pope's plantation, $40 a month; William E. Park, of Andover, Mass., 24 years old, graduate of Yale, superintendent at Capt. Oliver Fripp's plantation, compensation undetermined; James E. Taylor, of Andover, Mass., 23 years old, student, superintendent and teacher at Dr. Jenkin's plantation, compensation undetermined; Samuel D. Phillips, of Boston, 23 years old, medical student and graduate of Harvard, nephew of Wendell Phillips, superintendent at Dr. Pope's plantation, $30 a month; George M. Wells, of Providence, R. I., 20 years old, clerk, teacher, plantation undetermined, salary undetermined; Robert N. Smith, of New York, 46 years old, superintendent at one of Dr. Jenkins' plantations, salary undetermined.

● 175 S. Philbrick, a prosperous engineer and architect who had
657 left his home in Brookline, Massachusetts, to serve with-
out remuneration in this social experiment, contributing
567 himself $1,000 to the cause.[22] The superintendents gen-
464 erally had five or six plantations in charge, and, sometimes, with the assistance of a teacher, had as many as 500 Negroes to supervise. The superintendents found their laborers in need of clothes and implements, for the battle of Port Royal had occurred a few weeks before the customary time to issue winter clothes, and hoes were never given out until February. Moreover, the planting season had already advanced six weeks before the superintendents assumed charge of their respective plantations. In addition to these handicaps, they had to learn something about the methods of agriculture which they were supposed to oversee.

In every case the superintendent found it necessary to lean heavily upon the plantation driver for information and assistance and to follow the system of plantation management already established by the former owners. The driver was instructed to go about his accustomed work, stake off each hand's task as before, and manage the details of planting. The Negroes had already begun putting their own patches into corn, but they were reluctant to plant cotton, and it took much artful persuasion to induce them to do so. Thus, while the provision crop on St.
(248) Helena for 1862 was about the same as in ante-bellum
times, the cotton crop fell far short. The cotton crops
(433) from both St. Helena and Ladies islands amounted to
only $40,000.[23]

---

[22] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 181.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

175 657 569 464 (465)

The new system of labor differed from the plantation management of the ante-bellum regime in two important particulars. The lash, under no circumstance, was to be used in obtaining discipline, and the laborers were to be paid for their work. The money, however, was slow to come, and the hands worked for six weeks or more on short rations and promises. On some islands, which had been entirely stripped of provisions by the Army, the Negroes received Government rations, but St. Helena Island was considered to have ample provisions to feed the laborers. "They are crying loudly & and with some reason, that we don't treat them so well as their old masters," wrote Philbrick to Pierce. "They have no *salt* [,] no molasses, sugar or fresh meat. They see the soldiers kill their cattle & sit in idleness (as it seems to them) while their masters gave them a beef once a month & an allowance of the other luxuries. They consider tobacco a necessity, but can't get it at any price."[24]

They were unmindful of the fact that the Treasury Department was spending money to equip the plantations with seeds, implements, and mules, for in slavery days the planters had done this and fed them too. By the middle of May, the Department had forwarded Pierce $10,000 to pay for labor and had spent $15,000 for implements, seeds, and mules, having purchased and sent to Port Royal ninety mules and ten horses.[25] Early in May Pierce made the first payment to his laborers, $1 an acre

465

---

[24] Port Royal Correspondence, E. S. Philbrick to E. L. Pierce.

[25] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, p. 55. This was actually a very small amount for the purpose when it is considered that the Department was fostering the cultivation of some 13,795 acres. See Pierce, "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup. I, 318.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 for all cotton planted, distributed among them according
657 to the amount done by each, a very small sum, they
567 thought, for listing, planting, and hoeing. Pierce had
464 planned to pay the Negroes for their work a little at a
465 time, hoping to make them see that it was to their interest
to tend the cotton after it was planted, but they were
slow to grasp the significance of wages.[20]

Plantation work was further interrupted and the suspicion
175 of the Negroes further aroused by an unexpected
657 order from Major-General David Hunter, commanding
567 the Department of the South, for the collection of all Negroes
464 on the plantations between eighteen and forty-five
able to bear arms, who were to be sent forthwith to the
702 camp at Hilton Head. Pierce protested against the order as being contrary to the President's intentions and the instructions of the Treasury Department, and he was finally able to obtain the exemption of the drivers and a promise of the return of all those who were unwilling to bear arms. Nevertheless, he lost 600 laborers by this conscription and forfeited the confidence of many who were left behind.

The confusion resulting from the order disorganized
175 the whole system, for it discouraged the superintendents
657 and antagonized the Negroes. In most instances, the Negroes
567 were taken from the fields without being permitted
to go home for so much as a jacket, the soldiers, however,
702 sometimes allowing wives and children to fetch a few necessary articles. On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and prolonged, and the women threw

---

[20] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 320; *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 18.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

themselves in despair upon the ground, while on other 175 plantations where the news had leaked out, the men took 557 to the woods and the marshes, and had to be hunted down 562 by the soldiers.[27] [902]

In June, 1862, the "experiment" was transferred 175 from the Treasury to the War Department, and Brigadier- 557 General Rufus Saxton placed in command with instruc- 241 tions to take possession of abandoned plantations and to make rules and regulations for the cultivation of the land.[28] Pierce was offered a place on his staff with the rank of colonel, but forseeing, no doubt, that the plan of the experiment was soon to be altered, he declined the appointment. General Saxton was, from the first, sympathetic with the Negro and honestly attempted to carry out the spirit of Pierce's plan, but he was constantly annoyed and prevented from doing so by those who were not.

General Saxton inherited the confusion which Pierce had found harmful to the successful cultivation of the plantations and which in his brief command he was unable to overcome. The superintendents at once besieged him with requests to make some change in the plan of management before another planting season, but he was slow to take up the matter. In the autumn Charles P. Ware, in despair, wrote to a friend, "We need people at headquarters who understand the details of plantation work. . . . There is a general want of concerted system on all the places. Each superintendent has to do as he thinks best in all cases himself. General plans are usually determined on just too late."[29] It was more imperative than

---

[27] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. II, serial no. 123, pp. 52-60.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 152, 153.

[29] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 93.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 ever that some scheme of management be hit upon which
657 would make the plantations pay for themselves, for Con-
241 gress showed no disposition to help the experiment along
by an appropriation and the cotton fund, the amount real-
ized from the sale of the crop of 1861, was getting low.[30]

175 Early in November General Saxton called a meeting
of superintendents to consider plans for the coming year.
657 Edward S. Philbrick, superintendent of Coffin's Point
241 plantation, advocated an almost complete overthrow of
423 the old plantation system. He would divide the planta-
tions among the people, allotting the Negro families as
much land as they could cultivate, paying them upon the
basis of what they raised. This plan the government fi-
nally accepted for the crop of 1863. The plantations still
under Government supervision were divided into plots
[429] and rented without charge to the plantation families, the
land being apportioned at the rate of two acres for every
working hand and five-sixteenths of an acre for every
[248] child. If they refused to raise cotton, they were compelled
to pay a rent of not more than $2 a month. In addition,
[427] the Government supplied the implements and seeds and
[465] paid 25 cents for a day's work, usually the amount of work
performed by task under the master.[31]

175 Saxton now divided the territory under his supervi-
sion into three areas and appointed a general superintend-
657 ent over each. The local superintendents in charge of
plantations were answerable to their respective general
superintendents.[32]

---

[30] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 115.

[31] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 116. Pierce had approved of this plan in his "Second Report," p. 319.

[32] *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial 125, pp. 1023, 1024.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

In February, 1863, the Government began to sell the 175
conquered territory at auction for the Federal direct tax 657
levied by the Act of August 5, 1861. Some of the land 423
was sold to private individuals and some was bid in by 651
the United States for naval and military purposes and
some for "school farms," the profits from which were to [567)
be applied to the education of the Negro, now declared free by Act of Congress, July 17, 1862,[33] and by virtue of the President's proclamation of January 1, 1863.

In 1864 all Government plantations were leased to 175
white superintendents. After rejecting in 1862 the plan 657
of the cotton agents to rent out the plantations, the Government 466
had come two years later to accept it. But General
Saxton, still the director of "freedmen's affairs," did [427)
not propose to stand by and see the Negro abused. In April, 1864, he issued a circular requiring all superintendents of plantations, whether of government or private ownership, to file a signed statement with their general superintendents setting forth the terms of the agreement existing between themselves and their laborers. The general superintendent was then ordered to visit the plantation, explain the contract to the Negroes, and affix to it the names of all who agreed to the terms. Any laborer who objected to them was warned to leave his employer or to stay at his own risk.[34]

In many instances, the general superintendents encouraged 175
the teachers to lease the school farms and permitted 657
them to do so free of rent, provided that they live 658
on the plantation and teach the children of their "dis- 427

---

[33] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XII, 591. Congress declared free all slaves of rebel masters on places occupied by the United States forces, or escaping thereto.

[34] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 262n.

175 tricts." Arthur Sumner who had been the teacher for
657 Chisolm's plantation on St. Helena Island since 1862 out-
658 lined in a letter to a friend some of the difficulties of plant-
427 ing under the system arising out of the sale of plantations:

> 175 I think I have not told you that I have become a cotton-planter—or, as we style each other a speculator?
> 658 I have been forced to this, most reluctantly, by the fact that this plantation has been made one
> 657 of the School Farms. . . . If I did not lease the farm, it would be given to some one else, who might choose to remove me and em-
> 248 ploy some one else as the teacher of my school. And besides, the privileges which Government has hitherto allowed the teachers, and which are equivalent to a much larger sum of money than our salaries amount to, will probably be withdrawn before long so that I am obliged to make some money in order to support myself. I have therefore been obliged to borrow capital at the North, and before the crop is matured shall have to get a good deal more. The expenses are very large—including the purchase of mules, carts, grain, and before long, horses, furniture, cow harness, plows & so on. Carpentering, too, is to be no small item. And when the aforesaid privileges are disallowed, my expenses will reach a formidable figure. Add to this, that the young man who has undertaken to manage the farm for me, is to have one third of the profits, and there will remain to me after the sale of the crop no more than $1200 or $1500 net profit, with which to begin the ensuing year.[35]

175 The Government thus gave up the paternalistic idea of
government-operated plantations and was content until
657 the passage of the Freedman's Bureau Act[36] in 1865, to
exercise only a general supervision over the Negro, permitting someone else, into whose qualifications it did not

---

[35] MS in Sumner Papers. St. Helena Island, March 1, 1864.

[36] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIII, 507-509.

inquire too closely, to cultivate the plantations, employ 175
the Negroes, and teach them the ways of civilization. For 657
one thing, this system was far more economical than that pursued in 1862 and 1863. The social experiment which had been started so enthusiastically had been an expensive enterprise,[37] and the Government, now more interested in winning the war than in "civilizing" ten thousand coastal Negroes, turned the responsibility over to someone else. Saxton's powers were now very much limited, but he still retained supervision of "regulations for the sanitary condition and police of the department and for the protection of the freedmen in their industry and its products." With the Port Royal experiment the Government began the policy of protection which later it was to apply to the Negro throughout the South during the period of Reconstruction.

TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

The men and women led by Edward L. Pierce who 175
reached Beaufort March 9, 1862, took seriously their 657
charge to train the "contrabands" for citizenship. A few 641
failed in this arduous undertaking because of their incapacity to govern men, but none failed from lack of purpose or unwillingness to endure hardships. Some even died at their posts, victims of smallpox and of the fevers from which the former masters had annually fled to the health-resort towns.

---

[37] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 118n. "Taking the plantations as a whole, the Government lost in 1862 the whole $200,000 which it had cleared from the planter's big cotton crop of 1861." But see also *House Ex. Doc. no.* 72, 37th Cong. 3d Sess. in which Secretary Chase outlined on Feb. 18, 1863, the expenses of the Port Royal experiment. The receipts were $726,984.10 and the expenditures $225,705.34, giving a balance on hand of $501,278.76. The majority of the receipts arose from the sale of the confiscated cotton.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175
657
A superintendent's work kept him busy early and late. It was the duty of each to visit as often as possible all the plantations under him, some of which were as far as four miles from his quarters, equip them with implements from the Government storehouses, protect the cattle and other property upon them, urge the laborers to work the Government land as well as their own private patches, explain to them their own new condition and the purposes of the Government toward them, procure and distribute clothing and food whenever the army issued rations or the benevolent associations sent supplies,[38] draw pay rolls for labor on cotton, pay the amounts and settle the disputes which inevitably arose on such occasions. In

175
657
641
addition to these duties which were essential to the cultivation of the land the superintendent was expected to attend the praise meetings whenever convenient, read the Bible to the people, instruct on Sundays and other days those wishing to learn to read, protect the laborers from injuries, settle disputes which arose among them, and endeavor "to elevate them, and prepare them to become worthy and self-supporting citizens."[39]

195
657
466
One of the most serious problems which the superintendents had to face was the discipline of their laborers. They were not permitted under any circumstance to whip insubordinate Negroes; they did not like to withhold rations; they had no place to imprison offenders except in the storehouses or in the closets of their own apartments. As a result, a wilful laborer had the upper hand of his

---

[38] *House Ex. Doc. no. 142*, 41st Cong., 2d sess. Pierce and his helpers distributed the first year of the experiment 91,834 garments, 35,829 books and pamphlets, 5,895 yards of cloth, and $3,000 of farming implements and seeds.

[39] Pierce, "Second Report," p. 317.

175 the fears of the plantation people, making them "satisfy"
657 with the new order. Miss Towne soon found the women
797 appearing at her back door, shyly offering baskets of eggs
in appreciation for the services she had rendered them.

175 Most of the Negroes Miss Towne thought to be "decidedly unhealthy" with bad teeth and general debility.[43]
657 Their bedding and sleeping apartments were "unsuitable,"
797 and they often slept on the floor at night without a change
75 of clothing. They did not take proper care of themselves
064 after exposure to the weather and made little effort to prevent disease. Their medical knowledge was a combination of folk-wisdom, superstition, and facts gleaned from ante-bellum days. They insisted on bathing a patient when the tide was going out so that it might take the fever with it. In 1864 Miss Towne complained, "They keep their rooms so dark I cannot see the patients, and if I order a window opened, I find it nailed up the next time I come. The people are beginning to follow a practice which I dislike. They *will* wash the patients with strong pokeroot, and vinegar and salt."[44]

175 To the superintendents the family life of the people
657 was one of the most distressing phases of the Negro community.
585 Among the first orders which Pierce issued was one requiring that all marriages among the people be regularly performed by a minister according to law, and he strictly forbade a couple's living together until the ceremony had been pronounced. Charles Ware, assistant superintendent on Coffin's Point plantation, had to deal with several cases arising under this order. In 1862 he wrote to a friend at the North:

---

[43] *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, p. 22.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

I learned that old Nat's boy, Antony, who wanted to marry Phillis, 175
had given her up and taken Mary Ann, July's daughter, without 657
saying a word to me or any other white man. 585 I called him up to me one afternoon when I was there and told him he must go to church and be married by the minister according to law. He flatly refused, with a good deal of impertinence, using some profane language learned at camp. I thereupon told him he must go home with me, showing him I had a pistol, which I put in my outside pocket. He came along, swearing all the way and muttering his determination not to comply. I gave him lodging in the dark hole under the stairs, with nothing to eat. Next morning old Nat came and expostulated with him, joined by old Ben and Uncle Sam, all of whom pitched into him and told him he was very foolish and ought to be proud of such a chance. He finally gave up and promised to go. So I let him off with an apology. Next Sunday he appeared and was married before a whole church full of people.[48]

But the missionaries found to their sorrow that the Negroes did not always have the proper respect for "a marriage according to law." Limus, a driver, had a wife and grown children on his own plantation and another wife on a plantation nearby. Nevertheless, the missionaries tried to settle such cases with a due regard for the parties concerned and attempted to build up among the people a feeling of family loyalty and pride. They urged the Negroes to buy a table whenever possible and to have regular times for the family meal when all should assemble for, the occasion.

175
797
581
585
837
657

Pierce at once opened the two white churches on St. Helena Island which had been closed since "gun shoot." Among the superintendents there were several divinity students and ministers who preached to the Negroes on

175
657
795
797

---

[48] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 95.

175 657 795 797 Sundays and helped conduct their praise meetings and funerals, but the Negroes were jealous of their praise meetings and did not want any of the whites to attend communion except those who were Baptists. The superintendents organized Sabbath schools so that those who did not attend the regular schools might have an opportunity of learning to read the Bible. It was not uncommon for as many as three hundred to gather at Brick Church on Sunday mornings for instruction.

175 657 658 871 The "contrabands" took readily to the schools which Pierce established. He attempted to place one teacher on every plantation who should conduct classes several hours a day in the praise house, but there was a great scarcity of teachers, so that on some plantations the people received only such instruction as the superintendents had time to give. Nevertheless, the schools were perhaps the best agents for obtaining the good will of the people. The books and slates which the benevolent societies supplied seemed a proof to them of the Yankees' interest in their welfare. By June, 1863, there were twelve schools in the department attended by 2,500 persons, some of whom were adults who received instruction after their work was done. By the next year there were thirty schools conducted by forty or forty-five teachers, with an average attendance of 2,000 pupils.[48]

The thought of the black folk within the Federal lines at Port Royal eagerly grasping for the crumbs of knowledge so long denied them inspired Whittier to write the following song for the schools of St. Helena Island:

---

[48] Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, pp. 107, 108.

"The very oaks are greener clad, 175
The waters brighter smile; 657
Oh, never shone a day so glad 658
On sweet Saint Helen's Isle! 871

"For none in all the world before
Were ever glad as we,
We're free on Carolina's shore,
We're all at home and free!"[47]

Among the first group of teachers to reach Port Royal was Miss Laura M. Towne of Philadelphia. Instead of beginning at once to teach, she acted as secretary to Pierce and greatly assisted him in his work. She was soon joined by her friend, Miss Ellen Murray, who at once began a school at The Oaks, where she and Miss Towne were stationed. Later in the year Miss Towne assisted her in the work. In August, 1862, she wrote, "We snatch a lunch and begin school. I have the middle class, Ellen the oldest and youngest. At four, school is out for the children. Ellen then takes the adults while I go doctoring down to the 'nigger houses.'"[48] Later Miss Towne obtained permission to hold her school in Brick Church and still later the Philadelphia Society, by whom she was employed, sent her a schoolhouse ready to be erected. This was the genesis of the school which Miss Towne and her associates in Pennsylvania came finally to call Penn School. Year after year she and Miss Murray labored against great odds to maintain the school, teaching without salary when the funds of the benevolent societies ran low, meeting many of the expenses with personal funds.

175
657
797
658
871

[47] *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (September, 1863), 304.

[48] *Letters and Diary*, p. 87.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 When the Government abandoned Pierce's plan of
657 training the Negro for citizenship with the sale of planta-
tions in 1863, it did not give up the idea of teaching them
658 to read and write. Some plantations and parts of others
871 were set aside as school farms, the profits of which were to be applied to the education of the people. Later when Congress ordered the sale of the school farms in 1866, it provided that the money arising from the sale should be invested in United States bonds and be appropriated to "the support of schools, without distinction of color or race, on the islands in the parishes of Saint Helena and Saint Luke."[49]

175 Pierce, in his "Second Report to the Secretary of the Treasury," declared that the movement which he had
657 inaugurated had exceeded his "most sanguine expectations." "Industrial results have been reached, which put at rest the often reiterated assumption that this territory and its products can only be cultivated by slaves. A social problem which has vexed the wisest approaches a solution."[50] The superintendents, however, were by no means willing to concede as much. Philbrick wrote in 1862, "I don't believe much can be made out of this generation by free labor, nor out of the next without teaching them to read."[51] In 1863 W. C. Gannett thought their state of
175 morals "decidedly better than it was under slavery—less
657 of licentiousness, lying, and stealing,—and more general
181 manliness and self-respect." "But," he added, "they are very far behind, in character as well as intelligence, and I

---

[49] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, sec. 8.

[50] "Second Report," *Rebellion Record*, sup., I, 323.

[51] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 110.

175° 657 181

suspect that most abolitionist views of their character are exaggerated in their favor.”[32]

THE LAND SALES

175

Congress by Act of August 5, 1861, levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on all the states and territories for the purpose of conducting the war, of which South Carolina's quota was $363,570.66.[33] To collect the tax in the eleven insurrectionary states, Congress passed an act, June 7, 1862, calling for the appointment of direct tax commissioners. Collections were made in all the southern states during the war and after its close either by voluntary payment or by sale of land. Commissioners sold land for the non-payment of taxes in Virginia, Florida, Arkansas, Tennessee, and South Carolina, but in every state except that of South Carolina the lands were bid in at the tax sales by the commissioners for the United States. The presence of the northern missionaries in the region of the tax sales altered the situation in South Carolina.

The commissioners for South Carolina, W. E. Wording, W. Henry Brisbane, and A. D. Smith, having been appointed, ordered the first sale of land to take place at Beaufort, February 11, 1863. The land to be sold was that in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes in Beaufort District, the area occupied by the Federal Army, and included the whole town of Beaufort. Many friends of the Negro both at Port Royal and at the North objected to a sale under the Act of June 7, for they wanted some special

---

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

[33] By Act of Congress approved July 1, 1862, the operations of the Act of August 5, 1861, were suspended until April 1, 1865, except for the collection of the first annual tax, and by Act of June 30, 1864, it was further suspended until additional legislation.

175 provision whereby land might be reserved for the ownership of the Negroes. A. D. Smith, chairman of the commission, was himself eager for some such provision to be made. In his preliminary report to Secretary Chase of 175 January 1, 1863, he wrote meaningfully:

> 657 The great object to be attained is the proper, permanent, and efficient organization of a system or systems of labor for the freed people. . . . The essential prerequisite . . . to this end is to obtain such a control of and title to the soil as will enable it to give a fixed and permanent character to whatever measures may be inaugurated for the organization of their industrial and social energies. All this, by the operation of the act of June 7, 1862, is placed within the grasp of the government. There can be no doubt that the government will be reimbursed many fold, even in a pecuniary point of view, for any appropriation it shall make, or outlay incur, in inaugurating this system.[54]

Miss Towne claims responsibility for the idea which made possible the establishment of such a scheme. "General Saxton is much opposed to the sale of the land to speculators," wrote Miss Towne, February 1, after a visit from him. "He thinks they ought to be preempted by the people, or else so divided and sold that the people can buy, and not be left a prey to greedy speculators and large landholders." Miss Towne suggested that General Hunter stop the February sale as a military necessity, and "General Saxton caught at the idea."[55] General Hunter immediately issued the order against the sale, and the commissioners, after striking off one lot in Beaufort, adjourned until further notice.

[54] *Senate Ex. Doc. no. 26*, 37th Cong., 3d sess.

[55] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 100, 101.

The commissioners took the matter to the War Department, and the order came back to proceed with the sales, leaving, however, Hunter, Saxton, and the commissioners to make restrictions as they saw fit. Accordingly, on March 9 plantations and lots in Beaufort were put up for sale and struck off, some to the United States and others to "speculators," for the most part, superintendents and teachers, at about $1 an acre.[56] About two-thirds of the land was bid in by the United States and the other third bought by fourteen "loyal citizens."

Eleven of the plantations sold to private citizens were bought by Philbrick. Like Pierce, Edward L. Philbrick thought that the social experiment of training slaves for future citizenship had not been given a fair trial. When he learned that the conquered territory was to be sold for taxes, he conceived the idea of carrying on the experiment privately. In setting forth his plan to friends at the North he explained, "I . . . don't undertake it for the sake of making money at all, but for the sake of carrying out to a more satisfactory issue the present short-lived and unfairly judged experiment of free labor, and for the sake of keeping the people out of the hands of bad men."[57] Accordingly, he interested fourteen men, all but

[56] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The average price paid per acre for all the lands reserved by the United States was 34 cents. See speech of William Elliott in House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242.

[57] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 135. See also pp. 140, 141. The agreement made on April 8, 1863, between Philbrick and his backers provided that the land be bought in his name and that he have complete responsibility for managing the estates. Philbrick, after paying the subscribers 6 per cent interest, should receive one-fourth the net profits, but he was to be liable for losses and did not have the right to call for further contributions. He was protected by the provision that no subscription could be withdrawn unless he ceased to superintend the enterprise. On closing the experiment, the net proceeds were to be divided *pro rata*.

175 one of Boston, in the project, and on March 9 bought 6,795 acres, valued by the commissioners at $24,120, for about $7,000, eleven plantations including Coffin's Point, Fripp's Point, Cherry Hill, Pine Grove, John Fripp's Big House, Mulberry Hill, Corner Farm, two plantations on Ladies Island, and Morgan Island.[88] For the most part he employed to help him in the experiment the superintendents and teachers who were already on the plantations. After conducting the enterprise for two years with many vexations and losses, he began to sell the land in 1865, some plantations to white men from the North, others in small tracts to Negroes. He got from $5 to $10 an acre for land for which he had paid a little more than a dollar.[89]

The land bid in for the United States had been bought with the idea of providing for military and naval purposes and with the hope eventually of placing land within the reach of the Negro. The President's instructions to the tax commissioners of September 16, 1863, outlined a plan whereby this hope might be realized. After listing
175 the land to be reserved for military and naval purposes,
423 providing for land to be sold to men serving in the army, navy, or marine corps, and setting apart thirty-six school
651 farms of 160 acres each, he directed that all parts of certain tracts not otherwise appropriated be surveyed into twenty-acre plots and sold to "heads of families of the African race, only one to each, preferring such as by their good conduct, meritorious services, or exemplary character, will be examples of moral propriety and industry to

---

[88] MS, South Carolina Maps, 1866. But see *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 172.

[89] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 277, 296, 315, 324, 326.

those of the same race, for the charitable purpose of providing homes for such heads of families."[60] The land thus reserved was to be sold to Negroes at not less than $1.25 an acre. All other land the President authorized to be sold in parcels of not more than 320 acres at public auction. 175 423 257 (435)

On December 10, 1863, the sales to heads of families began and were continued at irregular intervals until 1870 when the board was dissolved. In 1863 General Saxton issued a circular to the freedmen of South Carolina, authorizing them to locate on the land set aside for them. They were then directed to deposit with the commissioners on days announced for this purpose the full purchase price of the land together with a description of it and the date of preemption.[61] Buildings on any of these tracts were to be sold at one-third the appraised value. By June, 1865, there had been 347 purchases made on St. Helena Island. Of this number, 243 bought ten acres, (435) 166 paying $1.50 an acre and 72 paying $1.25, the other five paying from $2 to $6.50 an acre. The highest price paid for any tract was $350 for twenty acres. In only two instances did purchasers buy land as low as $1 an acre.[62]

---

[60] "Instructions Issued By President Lincoln . . . to the United States Direct Tax Commissioners for South Carolina," *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws*, pp. 61-66; *House Ex. Doc. no. 146*, 40th Cong., 2d sess. Parts of the following plantations on St. Helena Island were set aside: The Oaks, Oakland, Indian Hill, Eddings' Point, Tom Fripp's plantation, Cedar Grove, Hamilton Fripp's plantation, the McTureous lands, Hope plantation, Woodstock, Frogmore, Frank Pritchard's plantation, Jane Pritchard's plantation, Scott plantation, Oliver Fripp's plantation, Wallace plantation, and the Fendon tract.

[61] The right of preemption was later abandoned. See Saxton's report to Stanton, *Official Records*, ser. III, vol. IV, serial no. 125, pp. 1022-1031.

[62] See MSS, Heads of Families Certificate Books. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department.

175
423
657

General Sherman, after having finally reached the sea in his famous march thereto, as a result of a conference with Secretary Stanton, issued Special Field Order No. 15 on January 16, 1865, setting aside "the islands from Charleston, south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida," for the freedmen, and especially reserved the islands for "the sole and exclusive management" of the Negroes.[63] The order, however, specifically exempted from its operation those whites who had bought land at the tax sales. Saxton, who was authorized to put the terms of the order in operation, at once began to settle Negroes on the land. No Negro, however, acquired the title to the land by virtue of General Sherman's order. Later, Congress, for the relief of those who had been settled on abandoned plantations, ordered, in an amendment to the Freedman's Bureau Act of July 16, 1866, a sale of most of the public land at $1.50 an acre to "such persons and to such only as have acquired and are now occupying lands under and agreeably to the provisions of General Sherman's special field order." This same act called for a sale of the school farms in St. Helena's Parish at $10 an acre.[64]

Before the Government had sold all the land which it had taken over in 1863 for the non-payment of taxes, the possession of it had become an irksome problem, grievous alike to the Government and to the people who were trying to rehabilitate the region after the War. Money was scarce and the buyers few. It was not until 1876 that the Government finally disposed of all the land.

---

[63] *House Ex. Doc. no. 11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.

[64] *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, chap. CC, secs. 6-12.

The injustice of the tax sales[65] finally became apparent. The entire property-owning population of two parishes, except for a few free colored citizens in Beaufort and one loyal citizen on Ladies Island, had been deprived of their homes and all they possessed[66] to meet the tax apportioned to the entire state. In cases where the Government was still in possession of the property, former owners were permitted under the redemption act of 1872 to reclaim their lands upon the payment of the tax, costs, interest, and penalties, and under this provision a few plantations on St. Helena Island were redeemed. Through the ceaseless efforts of Congressman William Elliott, of Beaufort, Congress at last in 1891 passed an act providing a meager compensation of $1 an acre for woodland and $5 an acre for cultivated land, after the United States Supreme Court had declared the Direct Tax Act unconstitutional. The Government also refunded the amount of tax collected from each landholder. Sea-island planters, once the inhabitants of one of the wealthiest areas in the South, were now scattered throughout the United States, and the region which had been their homes for more than a century was left in the possession of their former slaves and the men and women from the North who had helped in the experiment of converting chattel into citizens.

---

[65] The history of the tax sales might well be a volume in itself, and can only be briefly summarized for the purposes of this study. For excellent summaries see *Compilation of Direct Tax Laws; House Ex. Doc.* no. *11*, 39th Cong., 1st sess.; Speech of William Elliott in the House of Representatives, Dec. 11, 1888, *Congressional Record*, XX, pt. III, Appendix, pp. 239-242; and see *U. S. Statutes at Large*, XIV, ch. CC, secs. 6-12; DeTrevelle *v.* Smalls, 98 U. S., 513; Court of Claims Reports (1891-1892), XXVII, p. 27.

[66] MS, Record of Sale of Household and Plantation Equipment in South Carolina. In Archives of U. S. Treasury Department. The personal property on the plantations was sold at auction in 1864.

THE NEGRO AS A LANDOWNER

175 The opportunity to buy land of their own created the
423 first real excitement among the Negroes which had occurred
since "gun shoot." They were all astir trying to
stake out claims and then trying to get their claims considered
175 by the commissioners. They had the money which
they had earned as plantation hands for the Government
423 and as laborers at the camps with which to meet the purchase
434 price. Besides, many of them had sold fish, chickens,
and garden truck to the superintendents and the soldiers.
W. C. Gannett estimated in 1863 that a driver on
one of the St. Helena plantations had made four or five
hundred dollars since the Federal occupation. "He is all
ready to buy land," he wrote, "and I expect to see him in
ten years a tolerably rich man."[67] Many Negroes who did
[476 not have sufficient funds to buy tracts of the size they
desired organized clubs and bought land in this way.[68]

175 Whenever it was possible the Negroes chose to purchase
land on the plantations where they had been born.
423 In staking out their claims they invariably moved their
cabin in the "street" to the new plots of land, and started
life as landholding citizens on the very ground which
they had cultivated as slaves. Thus the transition from
slavery to freedom scarcely interrupted the daily routine.
Now they had freedom of movement, but with it
[434 had come the responsibility of earning their own living,
[241 and the only method open to most of them was the cultivation
of their little tracts after the manner learned in
slavery.

---

[67] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 370.
[68] *Beaufort Republican*, May 30, 1872.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

CHAPTER IX

THE AFTERMATH

A ST. HELENA PICTURE IN 1865

IT WAS SUNDAY in May, 1865. The sandy road, covered 491
in the low places with a top dressing of oyster shells, 248
led off among the cotton fields down the Island. On 175
either side were sagging wire fences, reminders of plantation boundaries before the war, the wire sometimes propped by drooping posts, at other times deeply embedded in the trunks of fine trees forming magnificent avenues.

Here and there were small frame houses, with narrow 361
porches and four or five rooms, the residences of former 175
overseers. Rude pine-log cabins, newly built, and clapboarded shanties leaning crazily in the mid-day sun dotted the fields. Gardens of growing vegetables separated 248
the cabins from the rows of cotton that extended away as 423
far as one could see. Little stakes occasionally marked 175
off private holdings, sometimes the only boundaries in fields of a hundred or more acres of cotton. Just beyond (137)
was a large tract lying fallow, covered with a luxurious growth of cassina and dewberries, or perhaps a young forest of pines had sprung up among cotton furrows which, though idle for many years, were yet plainly visible. 175

The cotton was small, for it was not more than four 248
weeks out of the ground, but the corn was knee high. (243)
Neat ridges were already piled up about the cabins waiting until the young sweet potato slips were large enough (244)
for transplanting. Here the fields were beautifully clean, carefully hilled up with the hoe by the women and old

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

248 175 (657) men, for the young men were still away in the army or at work in the camps for "cash money." Across the road the cotton was scarcely up, struggling bravely against wild phlox and grass, a picturesque battle bearing witness that the owner would beg for Government rations in the winter and perhaps stand by and see his land sold for taxes a few years later.

794 175 The freedmen, some of them now making their second crop on their own little "plantations," were on their way to "Brick Church" to hear "old Massa Richard,"[1] who had preached to them before "big gun shoot," speak in the open under the moss-hung live oaks. They crowded (492) (493) the road, a gaily-dressed throng of black folk, some on foot, some on horseback, some in wagons, others in the rude ox cart of plantation days, some even in northern trotting buggies drawn by Government-condemned horses which the proud owners had bought for perhaps as much as $300 cash. They were a colorful sight in their gaudy (292) calicoes and crinolines. The younger women wore straw bonnets, stays, and cotton gloves, but the grannies clung to their many-colored handkerchiefs and their loose gowns cut after the fashion of slavery days.

Their loud laughter and gay chatter rang out as they passed through the gates which in plantation days had made a private road to the church. As a buggy contain- 794 576 175 ing a group of white teachers and superintendents approached, those on foot stopped and drew aside, out of respect, to let the vehicle pass. The old women gave the white party a droll bob of the head, the young ones made

---

[1] The Reverend Richard Fuller, former pastor of "Brick Church" and owner of a plantation on St. Helena Island.

175•

curtseys, and the men touched their hats in a soldier's 794
salute, or swept them quickly from their heads. 576

The Reverend Richard Fuller created a sensation 793
when he arrived. Stares brightened and eyes grew moist. 796
Amid shouts of "Bress de Lo'd, Bres de Lo'd!" "Hebenly 175
Massa!" "Gra-a-ate King!" he mounted to the
platform. When all were seated a quaint old man, clad
in cotton checks, bowed from many years of cotton hoeing, (533)
stepped out on the platform and, leaning on his cane, (539)
gently swaying his body as if to keep time, struck up in a
shrill, cracked voice the tune:

"Ma-a-assa Fullah a sittin' on de tree ob life
For to yeddy when Jordan roll,
Roll, Jordan; roll, Jordan,
Roll, Jordan, roll."

And then a plain, middle-aged black preacher came forward (782)
and commenced a prayer, which he pursued at great
length with frequent interruptions from the congregation of "Amen," "Glory," and "Lo'd, do!" They had already been to their praise-house meetings twice during the week and some of them earlier that morning, but they were none the less eager for this Sunday-noon meeting when fellow freedmen from all over the Island gathered for worship and recreation.[3]

A few former planters, like the Reverend Richard 175
Fuller, had returned to Beaufort to try to take up life again in the little town now overrun with freedmen, Fed-

---

[3] The foregoing description is based on Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*; "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec. 1865, pp. 746-747; J. W. Alvord, *Letters from the South*, pp. 8-10; Charles Nordoff, *The Freedmen of South Carolina*; S. G. W. Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 839-861.

175 eral officials, and northern speculators who hoped to make of Beaufort, or if not of Beaufort, of Hilton Head or Bay Point, a great seaport second only to New York. A few [466] planters were able to redeem their land and begin planting under contracts with their former slaves made on terms approved by General Saxton, now assistant commissioner of the Freedman's Bureau.[3] Dr. Clarence Fripp, for instance, began to practice medicine on St. Helena Island shortly after the close of the war and by November, 1865, had obtained a surgeon's contract from General Saxton and was living at St. Helenaville next door to his former residence which was then occupied by Miss Towne.[4] Not more than three or four planters were able to redeem land on St. Helena. The heirs of Captain John Fripp redeemed a part of Corner Farm; Mrs. Eliza H. Chaplin, five acres of her Indian Hill plantation which originally contained 400 acres; and Edgar W. Fripp, 732 acres of

---

[3] Saxton was succeeded January 15, 1866, by General Robert K. Scott of Ohio. See Webster, "The Operation of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 86-91.

[4] Dennett, special correspondent for the *Nation*, in the issue of Nov. 30, 1865, gives a picture of Clarence Fripp on his return to St. Helena. Among the northern soldiers and traders in the hotel at Hilton Head, Dennett discovered a "person who had the easily distinguishable appearance and manners of a South Carolinian." This gentleman, a person of some fifty years old, dressed tolerably well in a suit of grey clothes, with a large display of crumpled linen at the collar and cuffs of his coat, sat before the stove, smoking and talking very freely about his present poverty and his plans for the future. After saying that he had left St. Helena when DuPont captured Port Royal, leaving his plate and furniture behind, he told about the sale of his plantation for federal taxes. "Some Massachusetts man had bought it, and he didn't know when he would get it back. . . . Up in Greenville he soon spent all his money to support his family, but if he'd had money he couldn't have saved his property. How was he to come back inside the Yankee lines and pay the tax? The Commissioners knew very well it couldn't be done; the sale was a very unfair thing." By returning to Beaufort now, "he hoped to be able to pick up a little medical practice; but if his profession failed him, he supposed his son and himself could put up a cabin somewhere in the vicinity, and get fish and oysters enough to live on."

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

an estate which had numbered 1,284 acres.[8] All but Edgar 175
W. Fripp after a few years sold their land in small
plots to Negroes. Fripp, a minor at the time of the war,
retained his holding until recently when he sold it for a
hunting preserve.

The prosperity in which the freedmen of Port Royal 175
found themselves in 1865 was largely delusive, for it 433
was the prosperity of war times. The presence of the soldiers 434
afforded a ready market for whatever the Negroes
had to sell; the presence of the camps offered ready work (657)
at high wages for those who wanted it; the fostering care
of the Freedman's Bureau kept them from starvation in
time of necessity. The magnificent bounty of $300 which (702)
"Government" offered all volunteers led many a St.
Helena youth to enter the army. The bounty money he (423)
used to buy ten acres of land and the equipment for his
"plantation," keeping out $100, perhaps, to "pleasure"
himself. Whenever it was possible to peddle chickens,
fish, and garden truck to the soldiers, the freedmen never
raised cotton, for they got high prices for their wares.

All who had bought land by the close of the war, had 175
for the most part erected their own cabins and equipped 433
them with a few pieces of cheap furniture, beds, tables, 511
and chairs. They now must have plates and knives and
forks. They must have both a work suit and a "Sunday
best," and the cloth must be of the finest. They must
have carts, buggies, and horses. Indeed, their purchases
at the trade stores were so liberal that the military authorities
several times interfered to prevent what they consid-

---

[8] Direct Tax Case, No. 17, 498 filed in Court of Claims March 25, 1892; No. 17, 366 filed Feb. 6, 1892.

175 433 511 ered extravagance. They lived better, clothed themselves better, and worked fewer hours than in slavery days, but they had not yet crystallized themselves into industrious and orderly communities.

WAS FREEDOM TOO EASY?

175 In 1865 Philbrick had not yet sold all of his eleven plantations. Besides his holdings, there were several other plantations on St. Helena owned and operated by men from the North. The Government, too, was still leasing the school farms to white overseers. Most of these men, employers of Negro labor, superintendents and teachers who had witnessed the transition from slavery to freedom, were of the opinion that freedom had been made too easy for the Negro.

175 567 657 181 Charles P. Ware, who had been an assistant superintendent under Philbrick for the Government and later remained on St. Helena to help Philbrick carry through his scheme of training the Negro for citizenship with private funds, wrote in despair at the beginning of the harvest season, the first year of emancipation, "The untrustworthiness of these people is more apparent and troublesome than ever. I feel as if it would not be safe to allow them to gin the cotton—it seems certain that a great deal of it would be stolen." He then set down the characteristics of the Negroes which made it so difficult to deal with them as laborers: "Their skill in lying, their great reticence, their habit of shielding one another (generally by silence), their invariable habit of taking a rod when you, after much persuasion, have been induced to grant an inch, their assumed innocence and ignorance of the simplest rules of

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

meum and *tuum*, joined with amazing impudence in mak- 175
ing claims,—these are the traits which try us continually 567
in our dealings with them, and sometimes almost make us 657
despair of their improvement—at least, in the present gen- 181
eration. It is certain that their freedom has been too easy for them,—they have not had a hard enough time of it. In many cases they have been 'fair spoiled.' "[8]

Arthur Sumner, who had come to St. Helena in 1862 175
as a teacher, seriously questioned the wisdom of the Gov- 657
ernment's policy toward the Negro in the early days of the Federal occupation of Port Royal and came finally in 1865 to believe that the Negroes' friends at the North had done the freedmen a grave injustice by protecting them against "natural economic laws." He wrote from St. Helena in February, 1865:

> I am exasperated (and so is every other white man in this place) at the mischievous indulgence shown to the negro. It is a common remark here, that "a white man can get no justice." This inhumane leniency is doing a great deal of harm, in many ways. It is teaching them to despise the laws, and to believe that Liberty means License. It is creating in the minds of the white people a very bitter feeling against the blacks, which, of course, is mutual. If Justice had been shown to both parties, from the beginning there would, I believe, have been far less antagonism. There will always be, however, until the blacks are as intelligent and well-educated as the whites, a contempt felt by the latter, and dislike and distrust by the former. It is so here and must be so everywhere. The negro has always been oppressed by the white man, and knows that even now he has it in his power, from his superior intelligence and acquirements, to cheat him. Even the best of the young men sent down here by benevolent societies at the North, have failed to gain their confidence. . . . The Black has got a long struggle before

---

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 287.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 him, ere he will gain all his rights; but I would rather, for his own
657 sake, see him oppressed for generations, than be spoiled and petted
as he has been here. He would come out of the struggle more
manly and self-reliant.[7]

Philbrick had been opposed from the first to giving the Negroes anything except in payment for services actually performed. He observed in the autumn of 1862 that they were more economical of food than they had been in the spring when they thought that the Government would ration them as their masters had done. Philbrick would have followed the same rule in regard to tools, paying them wages enough to enable each person to buy his own
hoe and spade. The superintendents were likewise op-
175 posed to the Government policy of selling land to the Ne-
657 groes at a special price. After the sales had been effected
423 and the Negroes had been in possession of their holdings
for more than a year, Philbrick was of the opinion that "no race of men on God's earth ever acquired the right to the soil" with so little effort as the Negroes on St. Helena. He thought that they would have been better off had they paid the market value of the land, "because they would use the land for which they had paid full price more economically, would be likely to get more out of it, and would be taught a feeling of independence more readily than by being made the recipients of charity."[8]

175 Philbrick himself had acquired his land at a lower
price than the Negroes had paid, but he overlooked this
657 fact in evaluating the Government's policy toward the
Negro because he was honestly attempting to put into

---

[7] MS in Arthur Sumner Papers. Feb., 1865.

[8] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 276, 277.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

operation a system whereby he might train the Negro to 175 ways of thrift and independence. 657 Nor did the Government ever give the Negroes tools and farm equipment except as laborers on the government-operated plantations. When the Negro became a landowner he equipped his own [432] farm from supplies at the trade stores for which he paid prices two or three times greater than those in the New (435) York market;[9] or he bought equipment at the auction sales of confiscated property, paying the highest prices and often bidding against white men.

Nevertheless, it was a fact that the character of the Negro as a hired laborer had been injured by the inflated prices which the soldiers paid them for their wares and by the injudicious policy of their well-meaning friends of the North. White planters, for instance, were jealously watched by officials of the Freedmen's Bureau who were over-anxious lest the freedmen be victimized. Officials of [466] the Freedmen's Bureau laid down the terms of the contract between planter and employee,[10] giving the employer practically no control over his laborers.

Under the system of labor thus established the Negro 175 worked for his employer less than three months in the 464 year.[11] He seldom worked more than five hours a day 466 and half of that time he spent on his own crop of corn, potatoes, and peanuts so that the planter had the use of his services about one-fourth of each working day. In addition, the planter supplied each family of laborers with

---

[9] Reid, *After the War*, p. 114.

[10] See Webster, "The Operations of the Freedmen's Bureau in South Carolina," *Smith College Studies*, I, 93-104, 113-118.

[11] See "The South As It Is," *Nation*, Dec., 1865, p. 747. Dennett interviewed most of the planters on St. Helena. See also *Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 6*, 39th Cong., 2d sess., p. 123.

175 464 466 (427) (465) a house and fuel and all the land for their own use that they chose to cultivate, usually three or four acres. Upon the corn land, however, they paid a rent of a bushel to the acre and usually supplied all the sweet potatoes needed by the white family. But the planter also paid his laborers a money wage of about $15 an acre for listing, planting, and hoeing the cotton crop and 2½ cents a pound for picking it. The withdrawal of the army and a succession of crop failures were going, however, in a few years to change the situation.

THE STARVING TIME

175 248 The only good crop of sea-island cotton grown during the Federal occupation was that of 1863. After the war, sea-island cotton planters faced a series of failures and the freedmen began to feel the pinch of hard times. "The negroes' crops did not turn out very well, as a general rule," wrote Charles Ware from St. Helena in 1865, "want of manure and careless working being the principal causes; the caterpillar did a great deal of damage."[12] (458) The crops of 1866, 1867, 1868, were likewise failures, and at the same time the price of cotton dropped. These conditions drove several of the northern planters from St. Helena; and, for the first time, large tracts of land lay idle. Miss Towne who had bought a part of Frogmore plantation wrote in 1868, "I don't believe a white man would run the place for love or what money he could make, because there are so few white men, and so much unleased land."[13]

Planters everywhere in the coastal region were laboring against great odds. Factors in Charleston and Savan-

---

[12] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 297, 298.

[13] *Letters and Diary*, p. 189.

nah, who were trying to carry on their business as before 175
the war, had but little money with which to do so, but they 248
lent and borrowed to the limit, taking great risks and demanding high percentages. Northern capital in many instances came to the rescue both of factors and planters. But the series of crop failures coupled with the drop in the [458)
price of cotton and the continued high price of provisions brought disaster to all. Frequently planters deeded large tracts of land, sometimes all except a hundred or more acres of what was once a large plantation, to northern firms for the cancellation of debts. James Gregorie, of Greenwood plantation, located not far from Beaufort, after making a tragic struggle for ten years to carry on his planting, finally gave up his property to a Philadelphia firm which he had involved heavily in debt.[14] In many in- 175
stances these northern houses, after holding the planta- 423
tions for a few years, began to sell them in small plots to Negroes, thus giving rise to the numerous communities of Negro landowners, aside from those in old Beaufort District, which now dot the coast of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Government offered relief by issuing rations to 175
the freedmen, now hard-pressed. Later when the Freed- 657
men's Bureau had been abandoned and the Negroes could 735
no longer turn to the Government for aid, Miss Towne came forward with provisions, supplied sometimes from her own funds, at other times by gifts from the North which she had solicited. In 1876 when there was considerable distress, the whites of Beaufort organized a society to obtain funds with which to issue provisions.

---

[14] See MSS in Gregorie Papers.

175 William Elliott, one of several natives who had returned
657 to Beaufort to live, was appointed to look after the needy
735 in Beaufort and on the islands. In this way, the Negroes
were able to face "the starving times."

175 If the profits from the cultivation of sea-island cotton
were low in ante-bellum days, they were far less during
248 the uncertain days of reconstruction. While some Negro landowners worked their cotton well, fertilizing the land and hoeing the crops regularly, still others were careless and indifferent. As a rule the cotton grown after slavery was of a coarser quality than that produced by ante-bellum planters. The fine seed, the result of many years of selection, had deteriorated. In fact, much of it was lost when the crop of 1861 was ginned at the North. Nor did the Negroes take pains to manure their fields. Gathering marsh grass and mud were disagreeable tasks which most of them preferred to avoid. The Negro landowners were further handicapped by the fact that they had to sell their cotton in the seed to the island stores and could not hold it for higher prices. A correspondent for *Harper's Monthly*,
[244] S. G. W. Benjamin, who visited St. Helena Island in
1878, found most of the Negroes growing vegetables and
[434] only a small quantity of cotton. Nevertheless, cotton remained the Islanders' only money crop. When, therefore, the boll weevil destroyed the production of sea-island cotton in 1918, the Negro landowners of St. Helena were confronted with an economic readjustment as radical as their fathers had faced after slavery.

175 After the inflation of war times, the Negroes of St.
511 Helena quite generally settled down to an economic
735 regime of self-sufficiency. They raised sweet potatoes and

enough corn to supply themselves with hominy and grits 175
and their chickens, pig, and ox with a scanty meal a day 511
pieced out with marsh grass and with moss which they 736
pulled down from the live oaks with long poles. When (434)
they sold their cotton in the late fall, they had a little (651)
money. With this they paid their taxes and bought (432)
clothes, and during the rest of the year lived without
money.

Sometimes their crops did not yield enough to meet 175
the taxes. In May, 1872, the *Beaufort Republican* adver- 423
tised 318 farms on St. Helena and Ladies islands for sale, 735
the taxes on which had not been paid for three years.[18] (651)
The size of their holdings was not only reduced by sale for
taxes but also by division among heirs, so that it was not
long until the condition which Philbrick had predicted in
1864 actually occurred. He had thought of dividing his 175
plantations among the Negroes by selling them life-leases 423
in order to protect them in the ownership of their land.
In explaining his unwillingness to sell the land in fee
simple he wrote to his superintendent:

> This occurred to me as a means of avoiding the terrible and disastrous confusion which it will be next to impossible to avoid after a term of years, if the fee should be conveyed, when the purchasers die and sell or change land as they will to a certain extent in time. It is bad enough to trace a title and find out whether it is good for anything here in systematic New England, . . . but it makes my orderly bones ache to think of a time when, after some men now purchasing land shall die, leaving two or three sets of children, some born under wedlock and some not, some not their own but their wives' children, some even of questionable parentage, and some who were never heard of before, all claiming a slice of the

---

[18] *Beaufort Republican*, May 29, 1872.

175 423 deceased man's land, and of course claiming the best. Suppose it was bounded by a 'stake and stone' as of old here, minus the stones which are absent; suppose some of the claimants think best to set up new stakes where one has gone to decay, and suppose, as is more likely, their neighbor thinks the new stake encroaches on him and pulls it up entirely, stamping on the hole and putting it in according to his own ideas, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Now, as you must admit that all this is likely to occur, and worse too, would such a state of things tend to bring about a healthy and rapid development?[16]

[578] As Philbrick predicted, controversies over land and the rightful title thereto retarded the progress of the St. Helena people by reducing the acreage and profits of farming and by arousing disputes which sent some of the best blood from the Island.

175 167 735 Hard times drove many of the young men from the Island and led many a mother and father to permit even their young children to be sent away as servants so that they might have a better opportunity of making a living than farming on St. Helena afforded. Early in 1867 Miss Towne wrote to a relative in Philadelphia, "I wish you could have the comfort the Heacocks have in the little darkies they sent North. The two young girls are large and strong and able to do pretty much all the work of the house. They work without wages till they are of age, but are to have the privilege of schooling. The experiment has been a perfect success, and every few weeks some one sends to them for another girl or boy, and all have given satisfaction so far."[17] Most of the boys and girls who left the Island in their teens went only as far as the nearby

---

[16] *Letters from Port Royal*, pp. 273, 274.

[17] *Letters and Diary*, p. 182.

towns where they found employment as servants and day 175
laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. 167
Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull 735
River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn
School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the
Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer
to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman
from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group
of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds 175
along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend 316
to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized 464
the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left
his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he
went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal
counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging
was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena,
the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort
Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of
the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look
to the future with pleasure and know that they will not
have to roam over the country next summer to look for
work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point
Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster 175
factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies 464
Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a (434)
means of earning a little ready money either as hands in
the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There
were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

---

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.

[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.

•175 464 who owned and operated plantations and drew their labor from the Island.

175 511 Despite the fact that the majority of the inhabitants of St. Helena never made more than enough to carry them through the year, there were some who prospered. [342] At the close of the Reconstruction period, small two-story houses with porches, window panes, and a neat coat of paint had begun to appear.[21] [492] [493] [292] There were some who still rode to church, as in the days just after the war, in northern buggies drawn by trotting horses, and poverty-stricken, indeed, was the man who did not have a Sunday suit.

175 731 Just as St. Helena was beginning again to be a little prosperous, the disastrous storm of 1893 in a day and night of fearful wind and rain spread destruction everywhere. The crops had not been so promising in many years, but the tidal wave which swept over the Island in August destroyed the greater part of them. Houses were carried away and there was scarcely a family which did not suffer the loss of some member. Juliana, nurse in the family of James Ross Macdonald, white landowner and part owner of the chief store of the Island, described the storm to her mistress who was away at the time:

> My fren,' the win' blow dat day fer true, but I ain't t'ink much about um, fer I see de win' blow nuff times in ma life. 'Bout four o'clock Sunday evenin' I lock de do' an' walk to Cousin Richard's house. . . . De house ben full ob people, an' I just get dere in time fer de win' bruck a-loose fer true, an' make sich a noise an' rock de house so, eberybody start to cry an' pray one time. Well, sir! 'stead ob growin' better he grow wuss, an' bime-bye de wing

---

[21] Benjamin, "The Sea Islands," *Harper's Monthly*, LVII, 858.

ob de house blow 'way an' seem like ebery minute de house go too; 175 731
so we hab to get out.

He ben da'k now, an' where to go, dat's de trouble. To make de misery wuss, de rain seem like he bus' de sky open to fall top we-uns. We get on de side ob de house where de win' can't lick we so rash, an' dere we stan' de lib-long night, jus' like a passel ob turkeys wid dey head down. De watuh get higher an' higher. We ain't know den dat de tide keep a risin' all night an' nebber go down a-tall. Fus' it ben to ma knees, den cum up to ma wais' . . . I hold on to de window sill tell ma arms seem like dey drap off. When de blessed daylight cum at las,' sich a weepin' an' wailin' in de lan'! I wish I ben dead, for all los' something: some dere house, some dere animals, an' some dere wife an' chillun. So much sorrow an' misery I nebber want to see agen![22]

In 1911 a similar tidal wave, less disastrous than that 731
of 1893, again swept away crops, homes, and live stock. In both instances Penn School, in 1893 under the guidance of Miss Towne with the assistance of the Red Cross and in 1911 under that of Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House, carried out the relief work and greatly aided the stricken people in beginning life anew.[23]

THE NEGRO AS A CITIZEN

A gaunt woman of uncertain age leaned dejectedly 175
against the door of her little cabin, two small children 837
pulling at her skirts, airing herself in the hot sun of the 834
summer of 1865 as though trying to rid her soul of misery. Her story was mournful enough. She had been sick. She had hired a woman to do her work. Her husband, Tony, had taken a fancy to the other woman, and after a while

---

[22] Claire I. Macdonald, *Recollections of Juliana*, pp. 16-17.

[23] See annual *Report of Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School for 1912* and MS, "Storm of 1911" in files of Penn School.

● 175 had gone away with her and "married." She had begged
837 him to return and so he did, but after a few months he had
684 gone off again to live with the other wife down the road a
few tasks away. He was in the meeting-house yonder, a
prayin' now.[24]

After Reconstruction, one heard fewer of such stories
175 on St. Helena, for the church officials attempted to dis-
178 cipline all offenders. Although there were fewer cases of
592 desertion, illegitimacy was none the less frequent despite
(848) the "churching." The significant change in family life
was the elevated status of the husband. In attempting to
stabilize family life, the superintendents and teachers had
appealed to the man as the head of the family and had
urged him to assume his rightful responsibilities. Black
men who had been accustomed to the dominance of women
during slavery came now to warn their wives to keep their
(423) places. The land which they bought from the Govern-
ment was in their own names and they came to look upon
the house as theirs, not that of their wives as in slavery
days.

Freedom brought few changes in the religious life of
175 the people. They still clung to their plantation praise
346 houses, but instead of one praise house to a plantation they
occasionally had as many as two or three. Besides this
they built a few new churches, for "Brick Church" was too
near Ladies Island to be within convenient reach of all the
Islanders. But their church forms they changed very little
175 except to make the praise house leaders subject to the
794 Negro preachers of their churches whereas during ante-
793 bellum days they had been subject to the white ministers.

---

[24] See Reid, *After the War*, p. 106n.

When a person wished to become a member of the 175
church, he must go into seclusion for two or three weeks 795
until he had received a vision that his sins had been forgiven. 787
During this time of seclusion, he was said to be "seeking." Upon the genuineness of his vision the praise leader must pass judgment. Then the candidate must go through the catechism, thoroughly memorizing every sentence, and pass two examinations in the praise house and
one in the church before being admitted to baptism. Once 175
admitted, he wore the head cloth of the candidate until the 795
day of baptism which was usually on communion Sunday. (292
Dressed in white robes, the candidates came to the river at high tide to receive the ordinance of baptism. Miss Towne described a baptism in January, 1876, as being
lengthy but impressive. Before communion, which preceded 175
the baptismal service, the minister told the church 788
members "that they were not to take a long drink of wine,
but a sip only—that he had been told that 'some of they 795
said they meant to get their two cents' worth.' (That is the amount generally subscribed by each to buy the wine.) He told them that was very naughty conduct in church members." The elders, Miss Towne explained, "used to take the first filled cup, throw back their heads, and drain it with gusto. That was their idea of partaking of the Lord's Supper." Communion over, the members filed outside to the river bank and amid prayer and song the candidates were immersed.

As in slavery days, the praise leaders attempted to 175
regulate the affairs of the praise members, so in freedom 793
the officers of the praise houses and the churches sought 692
to regulate all the private and public disputes arising on

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

175 993 692 the Island. As one of the preachers explained, "when one member gets wrong and the case cannot be settled at home it is taken to the church and sometimes the member is subjected [to] little embarrassment." [25]

175 692 It was many years, however, before the praise houses and churches obtained the prestige in settling disputes that they exercise today. In the first days of freedom, the cases going up to the "unjust law," as the people term legal processes, were numerous. Miss Towne's brother, William Edward Towne, was appointed a magistrate for St. Helena in 1869. "Some days half a dozen cases are brought before him," wrote Miss Towne, "and one day in the week, Tuesday, he and the other two selectmen have a meeting and make out jury lists, and do all sorts of township business. . . . I think a constable or two are here every day, to get orders or bring culprits."[26]

175 658 871 In 1866, as it has already been pointed out, the school farms were sold and the plantation schools abandoned, but the fund arising from the sale of the land was set aside for the establishment of schools in St. Helena's and St. Luke's parishes "without distinction of race or color." By 1871 this fund had amounted to something more than $68,000.[27] The benevolent associations, such as the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, the Germantown Associ-

---

[25] MS, "St. Helena." In possession of Penn School.

[26] *Letters and Diary*, pp. 210, 211.

[27] *Senate Mis. Doc. no. 79*, 41st Cong., 3d sess. In response to an inquiry from Congress as to "the total amount of funds in the hands of any officer of the Government, set apart for the purposes of education in the parishes of St. Helena and St. Luke, in Beaufort County, South Carolina," Commissioner A. Pleasanton replied: " . . . there is invested in United States bonds . . . . about $57,000; and there is in the hands of Collector Cloutman, of the second district, South Carolina, between three and four thousand dollars, and in the hands of Hon. W. E. Werding, not yet turned over to Collector Cloutman, between eight and nine thousand dollars."

ation, and the Benezet Association, all of Pennsylvania, 175 658 871 continued to keep teachers in the field until about 1872,[28] and Philbrick employed teachers for the people on his plantations until he sold the land. State schools were not 175 871 872 started on St. Helena Island until 1874, and then conducted for three months in "small rooms of dwelling houses, or rough cotton houses—out of repair and without glass windows."[29] The three trustees for St. Helena, of whom Miss Towne was one, hoped to build a schoolhouse each year until every part of the Island was accommodated. (659) With the aid of the Federal fund, they were able to erect small buildings and keep them in repair.

The public schools, however, were always inadequate, for there were never sufficient funds to equip them properly and no money whatever to provide the pupils with books and slates, and the pupils themselves had no ready money with which to buy them. "The State schools," wrote Miss Towne in 1874, "are now taught by colored teachers of small attainment and experience, mostly from our Penn Schools[30] in this district, or by the returned 'old owners,' who also have little experience."[31]

Miss Towne, with the assistance of Miss Murray and 175 872 sometimes with that of her graduates, enlarged the curriculum of Penn School and gradually extended the school's influence over the Island. The school offered its pupils the orthodox classical education in the elementary

---

[28] The Benezet Association gave some aid to Penn School until about 1879.

[29] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, Nov. 13, 1873.

[30] There were several schools in the region around Beaufort during the periods of occupation and reconstruction supported by Pennsylvania benevolent societies.

[31] MS, Letters of Laura M. Towne. Laura M. Towne to F. R. Cope, April 11, 1874.

872 grades. The school was equipped with blackboards,
(175) charts, and maps, and in most cases provided the pupils
with books and slates. After Miss Towne's death in 1901,
Miss Murray carried on the work of the school until 1904
when Miss Rossa B. Cooley and Miss Grace B. House,
teachers at Hampton Institute in Virginia, took over the
work, and the curriculum was enlarged to include industrial
and agricultural training similar to that offered by
Hampton.

527 As in slavery the laborer had stopped work at noon
(461) Saturday and declared a holiday until Monday morning,
(567) so did the freedman. Saturday afternoon saw the island
roads lined with pedestrians and carts, for each head of the
family, regardless of where he lived, felt that he must pay
a visit to "Corner Store" or even go to Beaufort. Saturday
night was the time for general merriment, a dance for
non-church members, a sing or a shout for those who were.
175 Miss Towne complained in 1876 that on Frogmore plan-
527 tation where she lived the people were beginning to have
parties on other nights of the week as well. "Last night,"
she wrote, "our boys went to a party again, and to-day
they are sleeping it out. We have issued the edict, 'No
more parties this winter,' for there is arising among the
Frogmore young men a constant desire for gayety,—suppers,
etc., that we intend to begin to frown upon. They
(273) are flush just now, and are spending too much. They are
all temperance parties, which is one good thing."[32]

574 Although there were occasions when people from all
parts of the Island assembled together, as on Saturday
527 afternoons at Corner Store, at church on Sunday mornings,

175

---

[32] *Letters and Diary*, p. 257.

11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

---

or at funerals, social life on St. Helena, as Miss Towne 574
suggested in her complaint against the Frogmore people, 527
was still by plantations. Distances on the Island were too 175
great to enable any considerable amount of inter-plantation visiting. The old plantation names were retained, 551
therefore, and though a man owned his little plot of the 527
old master's land, he still regarded himself as belonging 574
to the old plantation. He was a Tom Fripp Negro, a 175
Frogmore Negro, or an Indian Hill Negro as the case might be, and he usually "pleasured himself" with his "own people."

To the customary holidays of slavery times, the freedmen 175
added three others, the Fourth of July, Decoration 527
Day, and Emancipation Day, celebrations introduced under northern influence. Dr. J. M. Hawks, who was stationed in the conquered territory during the early days of the occupation of Port Royal, wrote to his wife, "Where I live, we [*sic*] the negroes had a great celebration on the fourth, first at 6 A. M. raised a big flag to the top of the cupalo, . . . Then they had a regular barbecue—a beef was killed and roasted a la mode Southern. P. M. dancing commenced and was kept up all the rest of the day. Our Supts. and Schoolmaster and an officer joined in the dance."[88]

The people of St. Helena modified the celebration (178)
until it came to be an occasion centering chiefly about
Corner Store. There in the grove of trees opposite the (438)
store, people from all over the Island erected their stands
until the string of tables reached out to a task's length. There were so many trying to sell that there was scarcely any one left to buy.

---

[88] MS in Hawks Letters. J. M. Hawks to Esther Hawks, July 6, 1862.

175 527 Decoration Day was the one occasion of the year when all of St. Helena paid a visit to Beaufort, where there was always a ceremony at National Cemetery. "The Thirtieth of May," said a native of St. Helena, born in the early days of freedom, "was a day that I looked for [*sic*] to happiness. Early in the morning work was suspended and nearly all the people on the Island went to Beaufort. I can now recall how I used to watch with interest the great crowd that used to pass by our house from the other end of the Island on the eve of Decoration in order to be over [505] in town before the rush. We had to cross a ferry then and the accommodation was not very good."[84]

[567] The people of St. Helena celebrated the First of January not so much as New Year's Day as the anniversary of their freedom, for it was January 1, 1863, that President Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation. Here again the celebration was at Corner Store. Brass bands, perhaps one hired for the occasion and another composed of members of one of the fraternal orders, furnished music for the day. On a platform erected in a grove of trees, speakers, usually chosen from among their own people, addressed an attentive audience upon the benefits arising from freedom.

175 517 The freedmen had no sports as did the whites in the rural districts. They still fished as in slavery days and could now hunt when they chose, but they did not know how to play together in combative sports. Yet they were 175 181 a good-natured, contented people, happy in their freedom, ignorant in their isolation, suspicious of all "foreigners," but gentle and courteous when once this suspicion had been

---

[84] MS, "St. Helena." In files of Penn School.

allayed. Their folk-ways were the outgrowth of slavery; 175
their songs, the ones they sang in bondage; their speech, 181
the English their ancestors had learned when they were [533]
"tamed." But their home was one of the proudest of the [197]
Sea Islands, about whose history there is a glamour scarcely equalled in the new world. The object of French colonization, a Spanish presidio, a Scotch settlement, the home of the lone Indian trader and frontiersman, a center of indigo culture, the heart of sea-island cotton production, the scene of southern culture at its height, and one of the densest black belts in the South, this region had finally become suddenly and dramatically the home of the black people who had tilled the land and whose labor had made many of these things possible.